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AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

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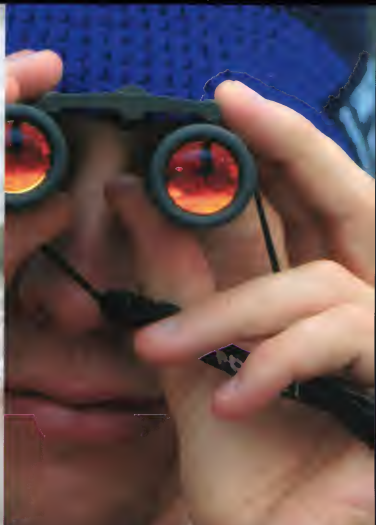


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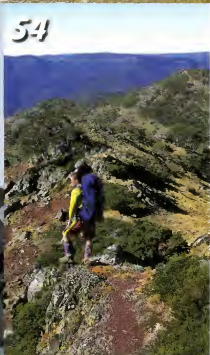
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Wild
A MAGAZINE OF AUSTRALIAN WILDERNESS



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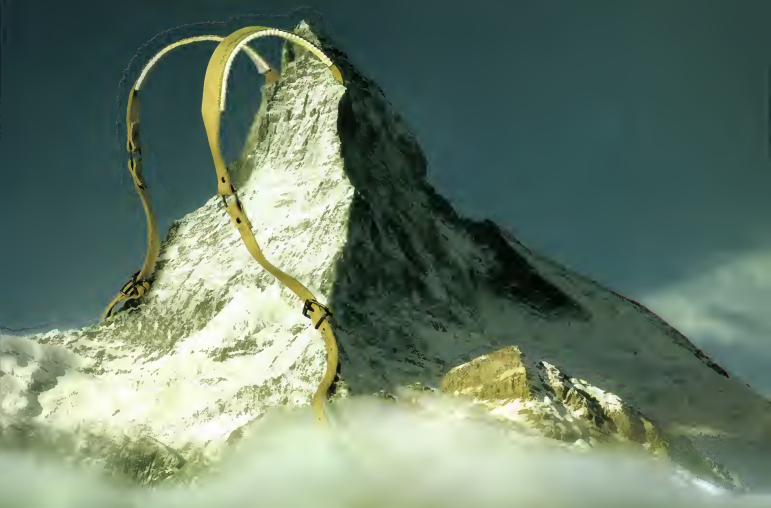
WARNING

The activities covered in this magazine are dangerous. Undertaking them without proper training, experience, skill, regard to safety, and equipment could result in serious injury or death.



Cover Tony Hampton sips his breakfast tea at a camp-site in the Mt Jagungal Wilderness, Kosciuszko National Park, New South Wales.
Greg Caire


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FULL SPEED AHEAD

On to the next 100...

WILD NO 100 WAS A BIG ONE FOR US, for more reasons than those obvious from the numerals. The magazine was bigger, with more pages and a free guidebook, 'bumper' articles and a layout improved through the expenditure of much time and effort. 'Behind the scenes' activity also kept the Wild team working, organising media releases, promotional material for newsagents and advertisers, display competitions for the outdoors shops, the readership survey and, of

task ahead: working on further improvements to the magazine, and notching up our second hundred!

On 14 March Senator Bob Brown officially launched the 100th issue of *Wild* at a party in Melbourne. Masses of our stalwart supporters were in attendance—advertisers, contributors, environmentalists and ex-staff. Some people went to extraordinary lengths to get there, rescheduling holidays and travelling from all around the country. The Spelean crew flew in from Sydney for a few hours, and among other interstate guests were Quentin Chester, Meg McKone and Bob Brown, although

we suspect that they were keen to get sneak previews of their articles! The evening was a great opportunity for us to meet people who had previously only been voices on the phone and names in the in-box, to discuss *Wild* articles, history and news, and get ideas, inspiration and enthusiasm from those who contribute in so many ways. It was also an evening for notable outdoors bods to get together, talk the talk and drink the wine, with many experiences, stories and trips discussed with various degrees of exaggeration! We brought together many of our special advisers—it was the first time John and Monica Chapman, Roger Lembit and David Noble had been together in one room but there are doubts whether it will be the last.



Editor Megan Holbeck at the Wild no 100 party on 14 March. Right, Greens Senator Bob Brown officially launches the 25th anniversary issue. All photos Mark Mathews



course, the party to celebrate the release of the 25th anniversary magazine. But, as alluded to in the last Editorial, it wasn't just for these reasons that the last issue marked a watershed for Wild. During the production of the magazine the present staff really bedded in, working hard in an inspired, committed and efficient way to produce an issue of which we are all very proud. With the milestone behind us we're now concentrating on the



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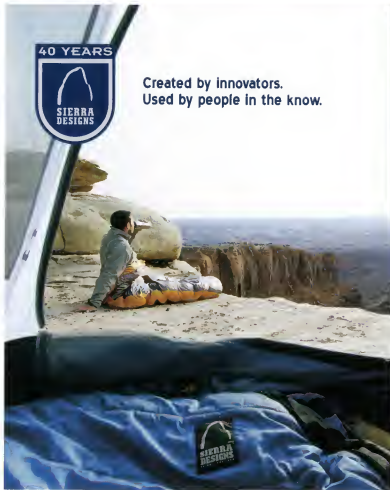
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See below for publication dates.

Contributions, preferably well illustrated with slides, are welcome. **Contributors' Guidelines** are available at www.wild.com.au.

Written submissions should be supplied by email in either PC or Mac format. Hard copy should also be supplied. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of sheets of A4 paper. Please ensure that submissions are accompanied by an envelope and sufficient postage. Names and addresses should be written on manuscripts and photos. While every care is taken, no responsibility is accepted for material submitted. Articles represent the views of the authors, and not necessarily those of the publisher.

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Wild is printed on Monza paper, which is made of 35 per cent pre-consumer waste and 15 per cent post-consumer waste that has been recycled and oxygen bleached. The cover has a water-based varnish (not an environmentally detrimental UV or plastic finish).

A short presentation on the last 25 years of *Wild* by ex-staffer Mark Mathews featured funky photos, hairdos and documents, both old and new, as well as the cover of every *Wild* magazine. Set to hit songs from the last couple of decades, it gave a good overview of how far we've come in fashion and music, as well as with the magazine!

Chris Baxter, *Wild* founder and Managing Editor for more than 23 years, gave an impassioned and revelatory speech on the reasons why the magazine has lasted the distance and the lessons that can be learned

thank him again for giving up dinner with the Queen to launch our magazine!

A copy of *Wild* no 100 was produced amongst a flurry of flashes and the structured part of the evening was over; there followed much page-flicking, gossiping, laughing and catching up. It's a real shame we can't do that for every issue although we'd have to hire another staff member just to organise it!

The next morning, the Wild staff wandered into the office feeling slightly sore, a bit vague and quite relieved. The magazine was officially out there and we were happy to have



Roger Lembit (left), David Noble, Monica and John Chapman and David Tatnall soak up the Wild atmosphere.

from this success. Amongst the points he made were the importance of believing in what you are doing and pursuing it with passion while communicating your vision to others, and having strong guiding principles and ethics to which you stick. Other lessons mentioned that still clearly resonate with *Wild* today are the need to keep sight of whom you are serving, and to stay energised while not losing the original vision and standards. Chris's speech was edifying and applicable not only to the task of running a magazine. However, for the Wild team it was even more useful, giving a very informed viewpoint on our task, which is sometimes hard to see when toiling at the coalface.

Greased by a few glasses of champagne and the relief of finally having a hard copy of the magazine, my thank yous and acknowledgements were sincere and easy. Then it was over to Bob Brown for the grand unveiling. He spoke without notes, his admiration and respect for *Wild* and those readers who 'get it' clearly evident. His relationship with the magazine stretches back to the ad he placed in the first issue for The Wilderness Society—he described the sense of pride this gave to conservationists and the lift it gave to the Franklin River campaign. Apparently his busy schedule still allows him a couple of hours to celebrate Australia's wild places by escaping into *Wild* whenever it makes its way to his in-tray, and we must

celebrated it in the style that it deserved. It was on to the job at hand: improving.

Since then the feedback has been great, reported sales excellent and the enthusiasm and morale in the office high. The response to our readership survey has also been phenomenal: by the end of April, with two months still to go, we had received more than double the number of responses we did for the previous survey—you obviously like the Internet! Thanks for celebrating with us in our 25th year, taking the time to complete the survey and allowing us to keep sight of what it is that you want. I look forward to sharing the findings with you in the next Editorial.

In his speech, Chris Baxter summed up the challenge ahead: 'If Wild holds firm to its guiding principles, its next 25 years are assured. Like the last 25, they won't be easy, but *Wild* will continue to make a real contribution. It will also be an adventure. Can any of us ask for anything more?'

The Wilderness Shop in Box Hill, Melbourne, won the outdoors shops display competition for *Wild* no 100. We hope the shop staff enjoy their prize and don't have to drive anywhere after disposing of it... Thank you to all the shops that took part.

Megan Holbeck
editorial@wild.com.au

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what I am saying is that it is impossible to win a fight to have all our tracks well maintained, and unfair to ask really, but if we can do our own, as guests of these parks, that may just keep these tracks maintained enough to keep them alive.

Ryan Malone
Devonport, Tas

I would like to respond to the concerns raised about the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service by Mark Tandy in the autumn 2006 edition of your magazine (*Wildfire*, *Wild* no 100).

Mr Tandy refers to a rumour that no money has been budgeted for major track maintenance in this financial period. One million dollars will have been spent on track works by the end of this financial year across the Tasmanian parks and reserve network. This includes areas like Wineglass Bay, the Western Arthurs, Hartz Mountains, and other locations including the Overland Track.

Major track maintenance on the Overland Track commenced in December 2005 and will continue until the end of April 2006.

The volunteer hut wardens based at Waterfall Valley are not required to undertake repair or maintenance work. However, the six seasonal Overland Track rangers do perform emergency repairs and routine maintenance duties on all infrastructure along the track, including the track itself.

All the income generated through the Overland Track fees is being put back into the ongoing maintenance and operation of the Overland Track. The fee is not a cost recovery fee, and the Tasmanian Government continues to fund a significant proportion of its operation.

Peter Mooney
General Manager, Parks & Wildlife
Service
Hobart, Tas

As a Texan having completed the triple crown of through hikes/tracks here—the Appalachians, Rockies and Sierra-Cascades—as well as the Alps, Pyrenees and Pennines in Europe, I've resolved to do something Down Under as well...the Great Dividing Range (GDR). Having read *The Never Ending Bushwalk*, I will not be repeating that year-long epic...so I've resolved to do the GDR now as a triathlon: from Cape York or Townsville

by bike starting in August, switching to walking about Toowoomba or Sydney or Canberra, then at the end of the Australian Alps Walking Track saw that one could begin a kayak trip perhaps at a lake near Melbourne...with a tributary going up to join the Murray and finishing near Adelaide or else walk from near Canberra over the Hume and Hovell track to Albury and buy a kayak there...I will definitely have to get a better map...

PS I also think it would be nice if this GDR trip were repeatable and perhaps would catch on with others as a yearly adventure!

David Shimek
Houston, Texas, USA

More backslapping for the Wild quarter century

This issue (*Wild* no 100) is amazingly meaningful to me:

- 1 My photo!
- 2 Notice of closure of Mystery Creek Cave, which used to be one of my favourites.
- 3 Old gear: reminded me of my first sorties into the bush, such as walking through Cradle Mountain in 1967 wearing my dad's steel-capped work boots.
- 4 Franklin River: now one of my 'will go back' places. It also brought back memories of my caving days in the late 1970s when a few of the SSS folks in Sydney did a lot of the exploration for caves up the Gordon and Franklin...
- 5 Haute Route, which my wife and I are planning to walk some time in the next few years.
- 6 Article by Nic Bendelli with whom I learned to cross-country ski back in 1973! In our five weeks of skiing on the Main Range we only saw the sun on five days! I changed skiing companions the next year and had much better weather.
- 7 Victorian Alps skiing: been there and done that.
- 8 Canyoning article: I grew up in the Blue Mountains and did a lot of canyoning—it was our training ground for vertical caving—so have been down most of the canyons named (with old gear).

I usually can identify with a number of the articles/activities in *Wild* (which is why I subscribe) but this issue has really topped it. Keep up the good work!

Mike Martyn
Hobart, Tas

I WOULD LIKE TO QUOTE SOMETHING THAT was written on the front of the Frenchmans Cap logbook. It read something very close to this: 'I pay my taxes, yet I have to pay \$20 to see the Franklin River? Think about that! Underneath someone has written in reply: 'Mate, maybe you should get off your butt, walk another five kilometres along the track, and see exactly what it is that your taxes can't afford to maintain!'

Having said that, the majority of the walking track to Frenchmans Cap is amazing...especially the section from the end of Philips Lead to the Cap itself. Although this...track is incredibly well maintained, we all know the stories of suffering the mud of the Loddon Plains. The mud along here...is anywhere up to waist-deep in spots and...in places, the track has eroded to being at least ten metres wide and...the mud is only getting deeper.

...the Loddons are slowly becoming more and more dangerous to walk. The risk of catching a foot on a submerged tree root, or falling into a hidden spot...or losing the track is now significantly higher. The visual scar left by the track is also rather nasty...

What am I getting at?...the area is managed by a married couple who are based at Parks & Wildlife in Queenstown...They not only manage Frenchmans Cap, but much of that area of Tasmania, such as the Tyndal Range, the West Coast Range, and the other half of the Frenchmans Cap area around Flat Bluff and Mary Creek Plain. And whilst they do a great job...there is only so much they can do...

How about this as an idea: as was done 15 years ago on the Overland Track, how about we all help by laying down any fallen branches, planks, or bark over the worst of the mud when we pass. It may not work to its best, but perhaps it may warn people of any bad mud. I mark an X on the ground before any hidden patches of mud...

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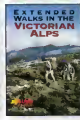
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Congratulations for *Wild* no 100! Twenty-five years is an extraordinary milestone. I love reading the magazine, I love your environmental stance and I just wish I could spend more time in the wild—bushwalking, canyoning, climbing, cascading and caving.

Dick Smith
 Terrey Hills, NSW

Wild has done more than we will ever realise to keep the wilderness spirit alive and well in Australia—for all the people. We are very fortunate that you *Wild* folk have cared enough to make *Wild* the great publication it is.

Good luck with your next 25 years.

Geoff Mosley
 Hurstbridge, Vic

Thanks for the invitation to celebrate *Wild*'s 100 issue...I would have liked to attend as *Wild* was the first publication to feature my photographs many years ago. Chris Baxter's early support for my work was a great confidence booster and I have greatly appreciated *Wild*'s on-going support. I also vividly remember reading the first issue on a train leaving Flinders Street Station and being inspired to seriously take up outdoors activities that have since become an important part of my life. No other magazine has had such an influence on me (except perhaps for *Monster Truck Monthly* and the *Hamster Breeders Journal*)! I hope the night goes well and *Wild* continues to entertain, inform, influence and inspire others far into the future.

Paul Sinclair
 Thornbury, Vic

Seeing the Light (to Light)

Having been inspired by John Chapman's article (*Wild* no 99) on the Light to Light walk in Ben Boyd National Park, my husband and I travelled to Eden just before Easter to try the walk for ourselves. It was a fantastic experience helped along by beautifully clear weather, warm ocean water and moonlit nights. The often abrupt changes in vegetation were really interesting and the wildlife abundant...As well, we had the track to ourselves...

A few updates may help those thinking of doing the walk in the future. Under the heading 'Access', the article states that you should travel 18 kilometres south of Eden then turn right into Edrom Road. It is, in fact, on the left-hand side...John Chapman also suggested that you could park at Edrom Lodge at one end of the walk and get a shuttle or bus service to the other if you only had one car. However, Edrom Lodge is now Government-owned and inaccessible. Also, the bus line quoted (Edwards) is now owned by another company which no longer travels out that way...

The final solution was to drive to Boyds Tower car park at one end of the walk and then get Eden taxis to take us to Green Cape to start our journey...At \$70 it was expensive but the cost of taking two cars, one to leave at each end, would have been more so.

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There has been no rain for a long, long time with 'creeks' now just depressions in the landscape, so campers should be careful to take all their own water.

Thanks for a great magazine. Looking forward to more articles about easy to medium grade walks like this one, which we older novice walkers can attempt.

Sue Ferguson
Gerringong, NSW

I really liked the article in the current issue (*Wild* no 99) about 'stealing a walk'. I suppose we have all been doing it for years but didn't realise it. Now it has an official name... On a recent drive back from Sydney Airport to Newcastle I was feeling frazzled after driving through the Sydney traffic on a hot day. As I headed northwards a light drizzle began to fall so I decided to drive by way of Cowan and walk a two kilometre section of the Great North Walk that I had not done before. It was just the thing to get rid of the Sydney traffic blues. It was a beautiful half hour in the misty rain out along the sandstone ridge. I didn't think about 'stealing' a walk but it's kind of nice to now have a name for it.

Greg Powell
Valentine, NSW

For those rusted-on Volley-wearing bushwalkers who noticed a recent decline in the quality of the sole of their favourite footwear, fear not! I made a complaint to Pacific Dunlop about the soles of Dunlop Volleys cracking after a number of days of normal wear and tear, particularly walking over stony ground. The life expectancy of the shoe effectively halved as the rubber sole quickly broke up. This occurred with a number of pairs. Other Volley-wearing bushwalkers were experiencing the same problem.

Pacific Dunlop has since informed me that there was a bad batch of rubber that was relatively brittle used in Volleys distributed to several outlets last year, some in Sydney. They have since corrected the rubber mix.

Andrew Cox
Wild Special Adviser
Jannali, NSW

Thankfully, as Tim Flannery says, action on climate change does not need you to wait for a politician (*Editorial*, *Wild* no 99).

Few people are aware that you can change your electricity for renewable generation at little or no cost. I dropped almost four tonnes of carbon dioxide with a single phone call! It doesn't matter if you rent or own just as long as the bill is in your name. If you live in a unit you can do even better if you can persuade the Body Corporate to change as well.

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Alan Keenleside
Fairlight, NSW

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au

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Get out there

GRAMPIANS BURNT

Chris Baxter outlines how the summer's bushfires will affect Victoria's bushwalkers

As briefly mentioned in *Wild no 100*, Victoria's Grampians Ranges were extensively burnt in a massive bushfire. The fire, said to have been started by a lightning strike on Mt Lubra in the Serra Range, raged out of control for several days in late January, burnt some 130 000 hectares and 40 houses, and killed two people and some 60 000 sheep. Almost 50 per cent of the National Park was affected. The following areas experienced very extensive bushfire damage: the Mt William plateau and the Mt William Range (including Redmans Bluff and the Seven Dials Range) north to Halls Gap, the Serra Range from south of Miranatwa Gap to Mt Rosea, the Wonderland Range, the Mt Difficult Range north from Halls Gap to the southern end of Lake Wartook, and the Asses Ears. In addition, lower-lying areas adjacent to these ranges (including the Eastern Wall area), as well as nearby farmland, were severely affected.

By Easter only token parts of the affected area had been reopened despite a major advertising campaign to encourage visitors to return to the central Grampians. Apart from the major through roads from Halls Gap to Dunkeld, and from Halls Gap to Zumsteins, generally only the short side-roads to the major tourist lookouts of Mt William, Boroka Lookout and Mt Victory had been reopened. The whole Silverband Road remained closed, as did all walks in the Wonderland Range. With the exception of a few very short tracks, all walking areas affected by the fire remained off limits. Many major unsealed roads, including the Redmans, Stony Creek and Glenelg River roads, remained closed. The fire has caused widespread access restrictions but it is hoped that the affected areas—which include some of the most popular bushwalking and rockclimbing venues in the State—will be reopened without undue delay. Readers can keep an eye on progress at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au.

The fire occurred when the water-level in Lake Bellfield was at—or close to—a record low (see *Wild Shot* on page 88). Years of drought, and work on the dam wall, have revealed old roads, fences, trees and house foundations—even an empty swimming-pool—for the first time since the area was flooded almost half a century ago.



*The foundations of a swimming-pool lie exposed in the dry bed of Lake Bellfield. **Top right**, a sign on the Mt Victory Road. **Below**, the extensive fire damage below Mt Rosea as seen from Lake Bellfield, near Halls Gap. All photos Chris Baxter*

OTHER FIRE-AFFECTED AREAS

January's bushfires decimated much of the Brisbane Ranges National Park. Nearly 7000 hectares and much of the park's infrastructure were destroyed. The park has been closed since but the following areas have recently been opened: Boar Gully camping area, all areas north of Thompsons Road and McLeans Highway, Anakie Gorge picnic area and Staughton Vale.

Although affected by bushfires, the Moondarra State Park on the northern edge of the Latrobe Valley has reopened. Kinglake National Park is also now open, with the exception of the Wombelano Falls viewing platform and access track.



North Queensland **DESTRUCTION**

Paul Curtis picks up the pieces after Cyclone Larry

On 20 March Cyclone Larry hit the coast of north Queensland near Mourilyan Harbour and carved a trail of destruction approximately 100 kilometres wide and 300 kilometres deep into the interior of northern Queensland before petering out.



Many tracks and minor roads in the affected area were in a similar sad state after the cyclone. Paul Curtis

Damage to crops and property has been widely reported; however, other impacts are becoming apparent. The wind that ripped off roofs, blew down walls and flattened plantations has left a stark, skeleton forest that was once lush, tropical rainforest. In

some areas, all that remains is a leafless, tangled mess of snapped-off trunks, fallen canopies and uprooted forest giants.

National Parks authorities immediately closed all parks between Ingham and Port Douglas and west to the Atherton Tablelands—an area about 300 kilometres by 100 kilometres. A drive through the region two weeks later was depressing. What were dark green corridors of road under dense canopies are now open and sunny and resemble the aftermath of a fire-storm. The habitat destruction has also left the surviving

forest inhabitants without a short-term food source.

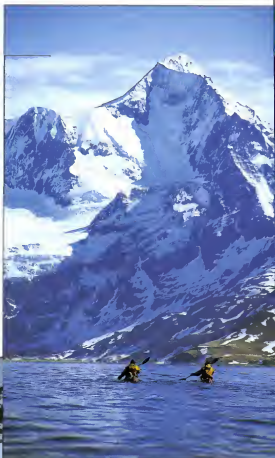
Parts of the affected area will be reopened once the trees stop falling and the ground dries out. However, the more remote wilderness tracks such as Bartle Frere and Misty Mountains will almost certainly be closed for months. Bushwalkers travelling to north Queensland during winter 2006 should visit the Queensland Environment Protection Agency Web site at www.epa.qld.gov.au or plan on going to areas south of Ingham and north of Cairns.

Oh I do like to be *beside* the *seaside*...

Andrew McAuley, Andrew Hughes and Graham Charles relate their paddling adventures in the south seas

McAuley reports that a trio of ambitious kayakers recently paddled for more than 800 kilometres along the Antarctic Peninsula, from Hope Bay in the north to the Antarctic Circle in the south. Laurie Geoghegan, McAuley and Stuart Trueman began paddling in early February and encountered tough conditions along the northern part of the route, with long sections of ice-cliffs and rocky coast that prevented landing early in the expedition and katabatic winds that dogged the team. They crossed the Antarctic Circle in early March before sailing to Argentina. Their route retraced part of the 1930s British Graham Land Expedition, led by Australian explorer John Rymill, which was the first to produce an accurate map of the Antarctic Peninsula.

A little further north, *Wild* correspondent Andrew Hughes is attempting to paddle from Hobart, Tasmania, to Cape York, Queensland. At the time



The mountains of South Georgia Island rear out of the sea behind the paddlers. Left, the first night's camp, a surreal, snowy experience. Both photos Mark Jones

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of printing, he had successfully completed the long, committing stretch across Bass Strait to Wilsons Promontory. A teacher, Hughes maintains contact with schools throughout his journey, using the latest technology in an effort to combine education with an expedition. Keep updated at www.pandoz06.blogspot.com

The remote South Georgia Island in the south Atlantic Ocean has a formidable south-west coast, dissuading attempts by paddlers. In October 2005 the Adventure Philosophy team sea kayaked around the island, completing its first circumnavigation. New Zealanders Mark Jones, Graham Charles and

Marcus Waters battled huge seas, fierce winds and freezing conditions—including heavy snow and six consecutive days of temperatures below 0°C—for almost three weeks to complete the epic journey, reaching King Edward Point on 31 October 2005 to a rousing Kiwi reception.



Wild Diary listings provide information about nacksports events and instruction courses run by non commercial organisations. Send items for publication to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181. Email editorial@wild.com.au

June

- 18 GWCC Winter Series Race 4 C Vic www.canoevic.org.au
18 KKK Downriver Race 1 C Vic www.canoevic.org.au
18 Paddy Patten 6 hr R NSW www.newswinning.org
18 Metrogaine R N Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
25 SQCI Marathon Series Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au
25 Upper Swan Race C WA www.wa.canoe.org.au

July

- 8 hr R Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
8 ACT/NSW Sprint Championships S NSW (02) 4271 7848
8 High Plains Tour 6/10 km S Vic 0417 352 845
8-9 State Championships ACT www.act.rogaine.asn.au
8-9 State Championships Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
8-9 State Championships SA www.sa.rogaine.asn.au
9 TRCC Winter Series Race 5 C Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au
9 CRCC North to Toodyay C WA www.wa.canoe.org.au
9 Multigaine 3/8 hr R N Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
15 6/12 hr R N Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
15 Sri Chimney 24 hr S NSW (02) 8254 7874
15-16 State Junior Championships S Vic 0407 255 223
16 FNCCC Northern Marathon NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
16 FOC Marathon Series Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au
22 ACT Senior/Junior Championships 2.5/5/10 km S NSW 0411 129 363
22 Charles Derrick Memorial Langley 5/10 km S Vic (03) 5758 3379
22 GOC Winter Series Race 6 C Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au
23 NSW Senior/Junior Championships 2.5/5/10 km S NSW (02) 4271 7848
29 Nordic Cabramurra Tour S NSW (02) 6242 4409
29 State Senior/Junior Sprint Championships S Vic (03) 5754 1101
30 Marathon Series Race 9 C Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au
30 Australian Senior/Masters 15/30 km Championships S NSW (03) 5754 1101

August

- 5 Australian Senior/Junior Sprint Championships and Relays S NSW 0411 129 363
5 Hotham to Dinner Plain S Vic (03) 9390 0316
5-6 State Championship WA www.wa.rogaine.asn.au
24 hr R

- 6 SSOC Twin Rivers Classic C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
6 GWCC Winter Series Race 7 C Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au
6 TCC Ben Lomond Tas www.tas.canoe.org.au
6 Metrogaine 5 hr R ACT act.rogaine.asn.au
6 Australian Senior/Masters 10/15 km Championships NSW (02) 4271 7848
12 State Schools Marathon Championships C Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au
12 Snowy Mountains NSW (02) 6299 9841
13 FNCCC Northern Marathon NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
13 CRCC Marathon Series Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au
13 KKK Downriver Race 3 C Vic www.canoevic.org.au
13 Metrogaine 3 hr R N Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
13 Bullfight Charge 3.5/8 km S Vic (03) 5772 2195
13 St Philack Cup 5/8 km S Vic (03) 5628 1279
19 6/12 hr R NSW www.newswinning.org
19-20 Australian Championships Vic (03) 5754 1101
20 GOC Winter Marathon Series Race 6 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
20 ECC Winter Series Race 8 C Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au
25-27 Trailwalker Sydney B BR NSW www.oxford.org.au/trailwalker/sydney
26 Kangaroo Hoppet, Brookhaven and Joey Hoppet S Vic (03) 5754 1045
26-27 Adventurerogaine 12/24/36 hr R Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
27 LHCCC Marathon Series Race 11 C Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au

September

- 2 GLOC State Wildwater C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
2 Wildwater Yarra Series Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au
2 Race 2 C
2 9 hr R NT www.nt.rogaine.asn.au
3 Kosciuszko Tour S NSW 0408 479 725
8-10 National Wilderness Conference Co foundation@colongwilderness.org.au
9 6/12 hr R Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
9-10 State Marathon Championships C Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au
9-10 AJMCC 12/24 hr R SA www.sa.rogaine.asn.au
9-10 State Championships 24 hr R Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
10 Great Australian Bushwalk B www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au
10 NWQCI Marathon Series Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au
Race 12 C

- 17 FNCCC Northern Marathon Series Race 5 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
17 Wildwater Yarra Series Race 2 C Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au
23 LPKC Winter Marathon Series Race 7 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
23 Nightgale 5 hr R ACT act.rogaine.asn.au
24 CuCC State Marathon Championships C Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au
24 FACC Ted Pace Memorial Race C Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au

October

- 1 Upper Murray Vic NSW www.uppermurraychallenge.dragnet.com.au
1 Metrogaine R Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
1 8/12 hr R Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
7-8 Brisbane Valley 100 Race C Qld www.qld.canoe.org.au
8 Ororoi Valley Classic BR ACT igardling@bigpond.com
13-14 World Championships R NSW www.rogaine2006.com.au
22 Brindabella Classic and Suits Head Challenge ACT mountainrunning@coolrunning.com.au
22 Wildwater Yarra Series Race 3 C Vic www.vic.canoe.org.au
28-29 Hawkesbury Canoe Classic C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au

November

- 4 Spring 6/12 hr R ACT act.rogaine.asn.au
4 Spring 12 hr R WA www.wa.rogaine.asn.au
4-7 Bright Four Peaks Race BR Vic 03 5755 1507
5 3/8 hr Multigaine R Qld www.qldrogaine.asn.au
10 Black Mountain Challenge BR ACT boydfamily@netspeed.com.au
11 WBCC Winter Marathon Series Race 8 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
11 Minigaine 3 hr R SA www.sa.rogaine.asn.au
11 Novelty 6 hr R Vic www.vra.rogaine.asn.au
18 Mt Majura Two Peaks Classic ACT igardling@bigpond.com
and One Peak Challenge BR
19 Socialgaine 6 hr R NSW www.nswgaining.org

December

- 2-3 State Championships Tas www.rtasn.au
8/24 hr R
9-11 Coast to Kosciuszko BR NSW www.coolrunning.com.au
10 Black Mountain Challenge BR ACT boydfamily@netspeed.com.au
18 Tour de Mountain BR ACT www.coolrunning.com.au
27-30 RC Murray Marathon C Vic 03 8327 7706

January 2007

- 7 80gong to Mt Hotham BR Vic jindsai@bigpond.net.au

Activities: B bushwalking, BR bush running, C canoeing, Co conference, M multisports, R rogaing, S skiing
Organisations: BC Brisbane Canoeing, BCC Beaudesert Canoe Club, CBCC Cape Byron Canoe Club, CCCC Central Coast Canoe Club, CRCC Canning River Canoe Club, CuCC Currumbin Creek Canoe Club, ECC Essendon Canoe Club, FACC Footscray Amateur Canoe Club, FCC Fitzroy Canoe Club, FNCCC Fer North Coast Canoe Club, GGC Geelong Canoe Club, GLCC Great Lakes Canoe Club, GWCC Gippsland Waters Canoe Club, KKK Kinnaird Canoe Club, LHCCC Lourdes Hill College Canoe Club, LPKC Lill Pilli Kayak Club, NWCCI Newport Waters Canoe Club Inc, RC Red Cross, SCC Sandgate Canoe Club Inc, SSCC Sutherland Shire Canoe Club, TCC Tamar Canoe Club, TRCC Towan River Canoe Club, WBCC Wee Wee Bidgee Canoe Club, YMCC Yarravong Mulwala Canoe Club. **Rogaine events** are organised by the State rogaing associations. **Canoeing events** are organised by the State canoeing associations unless otherwise stated.



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SCROGGING

Course record smashed at the Melbourne Trailwalker

Yvette Petersen reports that despite freezing temperatures, risk of snow, low visibility and two track closures, 79 per cent of the 481 teams who entered Trailwalker Melbourne finished with at least one member, and 70 per cent of the 1924 participants finished the 100 kilometre event. A course record was set by the winning team, Sydney Striders Travelling Circus, who crossed the line in 11 hours and 40 minutes, followed by defending champions, the Groin Sprains, in 12 hours and 11 minutes, one minute in front of the Best Boys. Women on the Run was the first women's team home, in 15 hours and 48 minutes. The hazardous conditions on Mt Donna Buang forced organisers to hold 1888 participants overnight at checkpoints five, six and seven until the weather cleared. Organisers were forced to close the track again five-and-a-half hours later. Despite the dangerous conditions, organisers recorded the fewest medical interventions in the event's history.

The Sydney Striders Travelling Circus celebrate completing Trailwalker Melbourne in record time.
Martin Wurt



Mt Loch car park be dammed

Cross-country skiers accustomed to parking at Mt Loch car park, the Victorian Alps, and limbering up for back-country trips will have far less room to spread out this winter. The car park at Mt Loch, near Mt Hotham, has been converted into a 27 megalitre reservoir, reducing the number of available car parks from several hundred to 60–80 spaces for the 2006 winter season. The car park is a convenient starting-point for several popular ski tours. The new reservoir will store 'Class A' treated water and is designed to provide a sustainable water cycle for Mt Hotham resort. It is claimed that the reservoir and the reuse of water will increase flows to local waterways. Resort management indicated that there might not be any parking there in future seasons.

Three Peaks race

Terry Travers reports that of the 16 teams in this Easter's 18th Three Peaks Race in Tasmania, six fell short of the challenge of 335 nautical miles of sailing and 133 kilometres of mountain running.

A deep low-pressure system produced gale-force winds and driving rain, testing runners and lashing sailors who braved four metre seas. Seasickness, dizziness, and exhaustion caused teams to retire one by one. However, no one was injured and all yachts reached shelter unaided.

First into Bass Strait was Phillip Marshall's diminutive nine metre catamaran *Marshall Engineering*. Best handling the wild conditions, the defending champion extended her lead at every port to win by 15 hours.

Runners Mark Guy and Paul McKenzie ran three marathons in three days to claim the King of the Mountains title despite losing the track for over an hour in darkness on Mt Streeleki.

Enduring four gales since leaving their home port in Jervis Bay, New South Wales, first-time entrants Peter and Phillip Arnos and

crew epitomised the guts for which this race has become renowned, crossing the finish line in Hobart when more experienced competitors failed to finish.

XPD Adventure Race

Josh Caple was on hand to witness the pain and pleasure of the Geocentric XPD, a ten-day expedition adventure race held every 18 months at a different location in Australia. On 20 February, 50 four-person teams from Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Singapore, South Africa and Papua New Guinea all stood anxiously atop the iconic 'Nut' at Stanley in north-west Tasmania for the start. From there, teams slogged their way through more than 670 kilometres of continuous running, kayaking, mountain biking and rafting before finishing at Hobart Harbour.

Competitors raced through spectacular and isolated terrain such as the Arthur River, Mt Roland, Mt Ossa, Lake St Clair, Derwent River and Mt Wellington. While teams were permitted ten days to complete the course, race winners AROC Mountain Designs stormed through in just four days, 21 hours and 55 minutes. If severe physical punishment, sleep deprivation, pain and frustration sound like your cup of tea, check out www.gar.com.au for more information.

Mystery Creek Cave update

Stephen Bunton reports that the Tasmanian National Parks & Wildlife Service has made it clear that access to Mystery Creek Cave is not prohibited; however, cavers are advised not to enter the cave due to the imminent danger of collapse.

World Rogaining Championships


Ian Brown reports that the seventh World Rogaining Championships are coming home to Australia. The event will be held in the spectacular Warumbungles in the north-

west of NSW on 13–14 October. Since the first World Championships were held in the sport's birthplace of Victoria in 1992, rogain's rapid spread has led to the event being held in Canada, New Zealand, the Czech Republic and the USA. For entries and full details go to www.rogain2006.com.au.

Rogaining is a long-distance, cross-country navigation sport for teams of two-five people. Like orienteering on steroids, the classic 24-hour event is a battle of brains, brawn and sleep deprivation.

Australia has been on the winning team in all previous championships bar one—in 2004, on home soil, the US team of Mike Kloser and Michael Tobin beat David Rowlands (Australian) and Greg Barbour (NZ) by just 80 points. The trans-Tasman duo have finished first twice and second twice, and Rowlands also won in 1996.

Scouting about

The 13th Australian Venture (AV2006) took place in January 2006 at the Cataract Scout Park, south of Sydney. More than 700 Venturers from Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Papua New Guinea, Japan, Swaziland and Jordan took part in bushwalking, canyoning, caving, gliding, sailing and diving at different locations across NSW. For more information, go to www.scouts.com.au 

CORRECTIONS AND AMPLIFICATIONS

Stoves that burn isobutane can perform well at high altitude and are popular for trips to high-altitude destinations, especially in countries where liquid fuels can be dirty.

Readers' contributions to this department, including high-resolution digital photos or colour slides, are welcome. Items of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Send them to Wild, PO Box 415, Pahrnan, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au

PERFECT EQUILIBRIUM

56

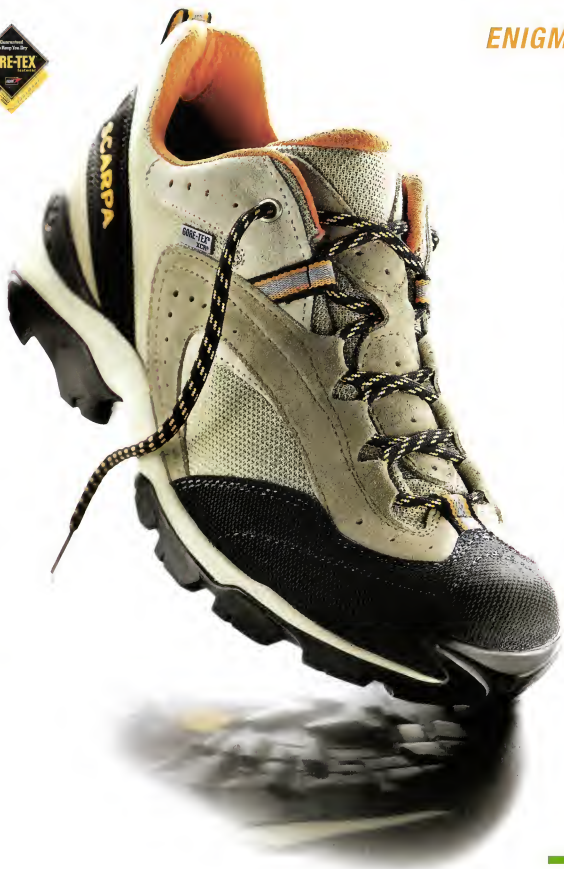
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06



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Love, HONOUR and belay

By Quentin Chester

BACK ON THE ROCKS AND THE WORLD IS STEEP all over again. Fingers clinging to gritty cracks, shoulders aching, palms sweating. And now that creaky right leg is wobbling of its own accord. Climbing can be such a humbling scuffle. Not to worry. If I make it to the top all will be forgiven—for a moment I will be immortal once more. Meanwhile, I give thanks for the rope and the person above who for 30 years has been catching me when I fall.

We're in Morialta Gorge, a deep gash in the Adelaide Hills. It's just 20 minutes out of the city but feels much further. There are waterfalls, looping walking tracks and a kilometre of sandstone outcrops. Among climbers—not least the locals who know it best—the place is often derided for its loose rock, bumbly crowds and many scrappy routes. Yet Morialta boasts the paramount virtue of convenience. Here hundreds of climbers have first tied the knot and taken the plunge. It's also where I first met Dale, my belayer, minder and wife. The place has history.

When I finally scramble to the belay it's hard to believe that I've done this climb dozens of times before, with and without a rope, in the rain and blazing heat and once even blindfolded. Now it's like learning to walk again. Still, at least the setting is remarkably unchanged, despite our fears to the contrary. As Dale climbs I bask in the autumn sun and listen to the cries of currawongs and the bubbling creek below. There are other small groups tinkering away on climbs around us. A young couple nearby is in earnest conversation; a girl in the distance is laughing and cursing her way along a steep crack. It sounds just like old times. Dale edges upward with her usual muttered determination and on top she sports the same elfin grin of 30 years ago. 'We might be older', she says as she unties, 'but we're not past it'.

Back then climbing was an obsession and Morialta was one of the places I was fixated on. For seven years it was a weekly ritual to cart myself up the gorge walls. Although Dale and I climbed together occasionally, we were mostly with other partners, on and off the rocks. We belonged to a scene, a shambling crowd that clambered all day, gathered for rowdy sessions at the Norton Summit pub and reconvened at one of our share-houses for more beer and belting music. I took this rollicking, communal life for granted. Only the climbing mattered. It was serious, self-defining stuff and I worked hard to be taciturn. Dale calls this my 'Hemingway phase'.

In the end it took me a year or two to drift away from climbing. There was no delib-

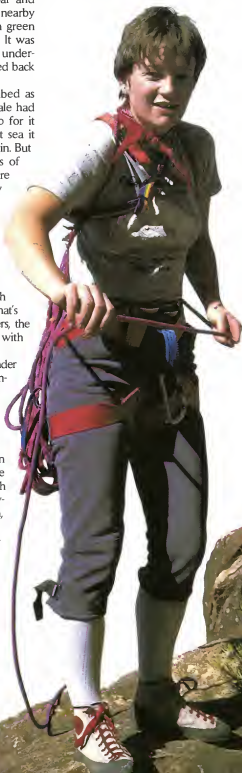
erate plan, just a slow, inexplicable fade-out. Instead I went skiing and sailed a lot. Then, over Easter, my girlfriend left for good. Not sure what to do, I spent the weekend dazed in my first-floor flat listening to Joni Mitchell. Weeks passed and on still nights when I lay awake I heard lions roar and monkeys howl in their cages at the nearby Adelaide Zoo. One day an angel in green leathers appeared on a Suzuki 400. It was Dale. She didn't say much but she understood what was required. I was coaxed back on to the cliffs.

The good thing was that we climbed as equals. Well, technically speaking Dale had better moves than I, but I made up for it with brute force. Having been all at sea it felt strange to be moving on stone again. But after a few trips away, the business of being roped together began to restore my faith in partnerships. In this new beginning, climbing was more about the company than competing. I had missed the solidarity of friendship that climbing demands, the fact that all the high jinks and laughter are backed by two unspoken words: 'trust me.' Once more I was into the serious frolic of the rocks, that fling with space that makes us scalp-sharp to what's on offer—be it the stone at our fingers, the glorious bush or the person above with your life in their hands.

Walking down the gorge we pass under overhangs and corners that spike memories of climbs past, but the details are a bit of a blur. 'When were we last here together?' I ask. Pinpointing the time has us sorting through dates as if we're each poking sticks into the same pile of leaves. When we get the chronology straight, Dale says: 'So that makes it 20 years.' Such a gap in proceedings seems inconceivable, almost laughable. But then again, we haven't exactly been idle.

We arrive at the Billiard Table, a collection of oddly tilted faces perched

over the gorge. The sun-wakened lizards are out now, jaunty little dragons with flanks in bright orange, blue and yellow. I scramble around to the top of the crag, perch myself under a she-oak and toss the rope down to Dale. We're not sure of the climb—we don't



'She who must be belayed', Dale Arnott, does some rope-work of her own at Moonarie in the mid-1980s, in full historic costume. Quentin Chester collection

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have a guidebook—but she has always been one to have a go. I remember her favoured garb in the early days: the King Gee trousers, her red-and-black-striped jumper and the jolly red scarf. Then, as now, she was alert, steadfast and keen.

For a time I was a bikie's moll, riding pillion on the back of Dale's Suzuki. It drove her mad when I slung my weight around as we swept up the bends on Norton Summit Road. To be honest, I was petrified. But I didn't mind an excuse to hug her tight in her green leather jacket. She felt different from other women—compact, strong and purposeful. She meant business.

Quentin Chester

After 30 years of walking and climbing, *Quentin Chester* is still tapping into the call of the wild. He has written widely about his travels and tribulations, including books on Kakadu and the Kimberley, as well as many stories about his fervour for the Flinders Ranges. qchester@seet.com.au



To this day several friends are bemused by our partnership. 'But you're so different', they say. It's true; I'm wordy and elliptical whereas Dale has a clipped, abrupt style. She goes to the heart of the problem while I skirt around the sidelines. For me, Dale's directness works like a cure. If you have a mind that collects shades of grey it's a relief to be with someone who shows you the world in primary colours.

By the time we got around to romance Dale and I had common ground all the way to the horizon. We shared the calculated thrill of being on rock. More than that, we welcomed the rapture with place that climbing brings. When you're poised on a steep face and the shadow of an eagle passes across the wall or you haul on to a ledge to find a diamond python coiled next to your fingers, the moment burns into memory. Climbing helped us abandon ourselves to the landscape, to prize the detail and drama all around. I loved the way Dale saw nature as an insider. And I still haven't met anyone with more empathy or wonder for living things. In nature—in going bush—we have always had a source of shared joy outside ourselves.

Dale is a doer. She likes to see things happen. Had it not been for her I would still be lying on the floor of my flat with Joni. From our many climbing trips to Mt Arapiles, I cherish the memory of her in command of a wok on the camp fire preparing to feed the barbarians gathered around. I treasure

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Image: Lisa Auer

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the look of glee on her face walking in a winter storm, the rain streaming down her cheeks. And there is a lasting image of her piddling along a Flinders Ranges creek-bed, lifting stones to see what was there, gazing up to the crown of a river red gum and talking to a vast mob of corellas as if there was every expectation of a reply.

From my vantage point atop the Billiard Table I gaze along the gorge. The buttresses are stacked vertically like a bookcase, the collected works of climbers past. It's hard to believe we once spent so many days here and harder still to understand why we stayed away for so long. Kids, work, houses—stuff happens. Dale tiptoes up the final face of the climb and into the shade of the she-oak. There's a hush of wind in its flowing beard of needles. The autumn sun streams and Dale's still smiling when she declares, only half in jest, 'We're young again'.

Two weeks earlier we were at Cape Gantheaume on Kangaroo Island's far south coast. We beachcombed around the shore line, stepping gingerly between the blades of dark rock to peer into tidal pools while the Southern Ocean crashed around us. We watched sea lions surf the breakers and gannets spear-diving the lumpy swell. It was our first weekend away from our daughters in 17 years and it felt like another beginning.

For so long we have lived in the present, one week speeding into the next, without a chance to see where we've come from or what might be ahead. That's what I like about the bush. There is time to look about. Here in the gorge we look across our early days together. At Cape Gantheaume there is a glance at life down the track. The curious thing is that after 20 years of marriage Dale and I still quite like each other. And we can easily lose a day trudging along a scrap of coast, giggling like school kids on an excursion and bringing each other gifts of shells and other treasure we have found wedged in rocks by the tide.

'And they lived happily ever after', or so the story goes. I never liked fairy-tale endings. Surely the really interesting bit is how people make their days together flourish year after year, how partners keep on changing, surprising, loving and infuriating each other. How do they follow their own paths, yet feel all the closer for it? What is it like to gather and share so much history together for 30, 40 or 50 years? Surely this is the best story of all. And besides, I think the world needs more frogs than princes.

They say to be careful what you wish for. As it happens my significant life partner and I do not aspire to an executive lifestyle. A resort condo is not on our list either. Nothing is certain but I think we're pretty safe with where our plans are heading. At this stage our requirements include a patch of dirt in the country, vegies, dogs x two, a battered twin-cab, a stack of maps and as many gorges, eagles, wild capes, diamond pythons, winter storms, creek-beds, shells and camp-fires as will fit into our time together. 

Gwendolyn Chamber

A Fiery RETURN

Julian Morton describes an unforgettable Tasmanian walk

IT IS OFTEN THE UNEXPECTED THAT WILL render a bushwalk unforgettable, transforming memory into a legend. Thanks to the unpredictable nature of the south-west Tasmanian wilderness, the four of us were certainly in for a few surprises on our trip to Federation Peak.

We began our attempt from Scotts Peak Dam, approaching by way of Arthur Plains. The plains lived up to their reputation for deep, muddy bogs—hard going for the uninitiated, significantly slowing our progress. Peter, Jon, Oliver and I were experienced walkers but only one of us was familiar with this part of Tasmania. Minimum-impact bushwalking requires walkers to avoid increasing the size of the bog by walking straight through. However, the reality was that in most cases we were forced to skirt the edges to avoid sinking in knee-deep. We used walking poles or sticks for balance and to gauge the thickness of a bog's crust. However, both Oliver and I snapped our poles by falling awkwardly in the deep mud.

The bogs were even more difficult on the second day, helped by the rain that started to fall mid-morning. Donning our jackets, we realised that each jacket was a different colour—we had transformed ourselves into the Wiggles! Countless renditions of 'Hot Potato' and 'Wake Up Jeff' followed as we walked on to Cracroft Crossing.

On the haul up Luckmans Lead the next day we finally had glimpses of Federation Peak amongst clouds, although not for long. We began to refer to the mountains as our own Mordor from *Lord of The Rings* and appointed new character roles superseding the Wiggles. We arrived at Stuart Saddle to meet two 'old school' walkers, one of whom wore Dunlop Volleys and carried an external-frame pack. They had set up a hoochie tent on the camp-site platform and were travelling light. Clouds had obscured the view when they had reached the summit earlier that day—at least they wouldn't have been subjected to the dizzy views when climbing down! We were in awe of these tough characters



The author (left), Peter Erhardt, Jon McNab and Oliver Hutchison pose before a spectacular backdrop. Julian Morton. Right, this fiery silhouette of Federation Peak was caused by the sunrise, rather than bushfire. Grant Dixon

who looked as though they had been bushwalking when we were still in nappies. We wanted to be in the best position for a summit attempt the next day so pushed on to Goon Moor. We ducked and weaved through a forest consisting entirely of pandani below a large rock buttress. Passing under the buttress, the track led us towards a scramble up a scree slope to a ridge. We watched the sunset from the ridgeline, the clear sky in the west giving an indication of good weather to come.

As predicted, the morning of day four was fine, without a single cloud in the sky. We couldn't believe our luck

FROM FEDERATION

The background of the page features a dark, silhouetted landscape of jagged mountain peaks or hills. The sky behind the peaks is a deep, dark red or maroon color, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is somber and dramatic.

“THERE WAS A LARGE FIRE ON A RIDGE APPROXIMATELY FOUR KILOMETRES AWAY. FLAMES WERE TWICE THE HEIGHT OF THE TREES AND THE STRONG WIND WAS BLOWING IN OUR DIRECTION.”

and looked forward to unsurpassed views from the summit. The peaks of the surrounding mountains dominated the skyline as we walked amongst cushion plants and native orchids within the montane moorland. Every saddle and ridge we climbed had views of the Western Arthurs, Bathurst Harbour, Southwest Cape, and out to sea. Dumping our packs at the spectacular Hanging Lake campsite, we refilled our water-bottles and clambered along the southern traverse to the foot of the final 130 metre tower.

There were moments of silence on the ascent, as climbing unroped with Lake Geesve perched 600 metres below required our full attention. The route was well marked by cairns and day-old Dunlop Volley footprints. We took two small detours, on both



The fire front near Cracroft Crossing at dusk. Morton. Right, walkers approach Federation Peak from the western end of the Southern Traverse.
Andrew Hughes

occasions realising that there was an easier route after all four of us had already climbed up. We shook hands at the top and surveyed the wilderness around us. Oddly enough Oliver found a mute gnome on the summit but none of us could find his diary entry in the summit logbook! He looked at peace with the world, so we left him perched on top of a rock to keep an eye over the Eastern Arthurs. By the time we descended to Hanging Lake for another feed of couscous and Oliver's 'no cook' biscuits the craggy peaks were casting long shadows.

The smiles continued on the fifth day as we began the return leg of our trip. After setting up camp at Stuart Saddle that night, we discussed the many people we knew who had returned from the walk without making the summit, driven back by dreadful conditions. We felt very fortunate to have such timely good weather—we'd had some luck but the summit was not undeserved. Peter's shorts could attest to the rough conditions and a makeshift patch was fitted to keep things decent.

The weather was also favourable the next day, with a pre-dawn side-trip up The Dial from Stuart Saddle giving us a beautiful sunrise and an exceptional start to our Australia Day. The heat intensified as we descended Luckmans Lead, the hot wind from across the plains burning our throats. An unusually

our track out. However, it was still a little unnerving to be camped near a fire! We agreed to monitor it and assess the situation in the morning.

Late that night Oliver became sick, struck down by a serious bout of gastro. It was a rather strange situation to be awake at 2 am,

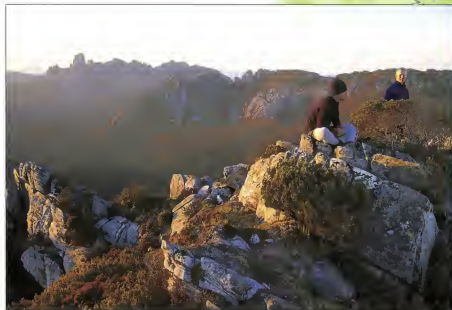


dry thunderstorm passed through the area bringing lightning and thunderclaps. During our dinner at Cracroft Crossing Peter smelled smoke—he has a gift that allows him to hear and smell things before anyone else, like some type of hypersensitive superhero. A short walk from the forest on to the plains proved that he was right: there was a large fire on a ridge approximately four kilometres away. Flames were twice the height of the trees and the strong wind was blowing in our direction, but the fire did not present an immediate danger to our camp-site or to

watching the fire burning whilst Oliver was on his hands and knees vomiting. With Oliver sick, we became increasingly concerned by the situation and discussed a number of options. However, we decided to stick to the original plan.

After being awake all night, Oliver was in no condition to walk on day seven. We opted to have a rest day to allow him to rehydrate and regain some strength. We suspected that he had got his illness from contaminated water at Pass Creek and we treated our water with Puratabs. The fire slowly drew

near to the camp-site during the morning, coming to within three kilometres, and at lunch we re-evaluated our options. We could stay, retreat or walk out as intended: we didn't consider changing our route and decided to walk out the next day. A wind change in the afternoon pushed the fire in a more southerly direction. Initially we were pleased with this, thinking it might burn itself out, but we soon realised that the fire was heading towards our return track. We still wanted to walk out the next morning if we considered it safe, but we knew that this would be a difficult decision.



Oliver Hutchison (left) and Peter Erhardt appreciate sunrise from The Dial: little did they know that their Australia Day was about to get a little more interesting! Morton

Jon, the perennial early riser, was first to wake up the next morning. The cloud was very low and dense, making it hard to determine the position of the fire front. There wasn't any wind and the weather looked stable—as stable as it gets in that part of the world. We figured that the cloud would slow the progress and ferocity of the fire, the moist air containing and even reducing the burning. We began the walk out, prepared to turn back if conditions changed or if we came too close to the fire.

Moving quickly up and on to the Razor-back we heard a helicopter; we had noticed planes and helicopters monitoring the fire the previous day and guessed that this was continuing. When we reached the Arthur Plains, the chopper emerged from the smoke and low-level cloud to land on the button-grass plain. A man from Parks & Wildlife got out of the helicopter and told us that the fire was less than a kilometre away: we had to turn around and head back to Pass Creek to await further instructions. As Pass Creek was some 11 kilometres away we ques-

Julian Morton

lives in Melbourne, is an honorary Swinburne Explorer and a construction project manager for Yarra Valley Water. He is passionate about adventure and mountains. He has trekked in Nepal, climbed in the French Alps and favours weekends spent in the remote Victorian High Country.



tioned this plan but it soon became clear that this wasn't up for debate—we began our walk back.

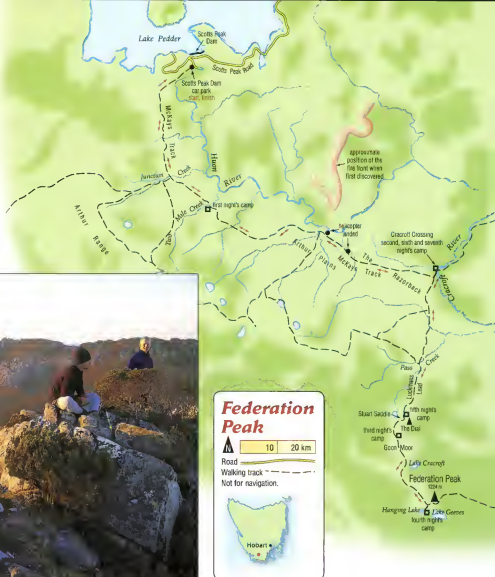
As we walked we discussed our dwindling food supplies and the fact that returning to Pass Creek would probably mean we would eventually have to be airlifted out. We would have been pleased to be airlifted immediately but the helicopter was full. This discussion was short-lived: within half an hour the helicopter returned and landed a second

time. The latest advice was that although the fire front was close, it was safe to walk out to Junction Creek. The ranger added that we should 'walk, like, really fast' but such encouragement was hardly needed!

The entire situation was surreal and once we were safely clear of the fire, we had a few laughs and shared a sense of relief. However, the south-west was not finished with us yet. An hour later, huge thunderstorms rolled in—the noise was frightening. None of us had heard thunder like it and the forked lightning gave me such a fright that on more than one occasion I threw my walking pole away in an attempt to reduce my resemblance to a lightning rod! We were grateful when the storm subsided and turned to drizzle and patchy rain showers.

When we reached Junction Creek, we noticed signs stating that McKays Track and the Eastern Arthurs were now closed due to bushfire. The helicopter had been looking for our party, proving that the logbook system really does work.

Dripping wet, we returned to Scotts Peak Dam car park after walking more than 26 kilometres that day. Two SES volunteers who had seen us from the helicopter greeted us at the track's end. In eight days we had seen only five other walkers and had overcome every challenge presented to us. It was truly an epic wilderness experience that the four of us will continue to recount around camp-sites with excitement and awe. 🐾



A Solo Jaunt to the

Michele Kohout dodges brumbies and stops to smell the flowers on her way along Kosciuszko's Cascade Track

DURING MY NEAR-ANNUAL TRIPS TO THE Kosciuszko area I always stop at the small Pilot Lookout along the Alpine Way. The Pilot is such a tantalising mountain, beckoning far off in the distance between the trees. It lies south of the Main Range and is less visited, a fact that makes it more alluring, at least for me. Little wonder that I found myself on a glorious sunny day at Dead Horse Cap, impatiently packing my gear. I was so excited that I almost ran from the car and down the Cascade Track! The weight of my pack soon brought me back to walking pace.

I looked out on to the treeless frost valley of the Big Boggy, excited to be setting off on another solo jaunt, away from the mental strain of my university experiments. What a wonderful way to relax, surrounded by nature and exploring a new location.

The area has been immortalised in Australian literature by Elyne Mitchell's *The Silver Brumby*. While written for children, it describes the beauty of the Australian Alps, the landscape, seasons, flora and fauna in a way that anyone can appreciate. It's set in the Kosciuszko area and reading it you can

Right, a rather frosty camp-site beside the Big Boggy on the final morning.

Below, the magnificent view from the Pilot, smoke obscuring the horizon.

All photos by the author



Pilot



imagine the creeks, gullies and rocks of the Ramshead Range. As in the story but 48 years on, there was a mob of wild horses grazing where the Cascade Track crosses the Big Boggy River. The rough terrain of the National Park has allowed these animals to breed in large numbers in the region and their negative impact on the environment has been well documented.

Australia's flora has evolved in the absence of hard-hoofed grazers and it is not adapted to heavy cropping or trampling by large populations of big animals. Horses, like cattle, tend to be very selective grazers, preferring soft, palatable herbs. As a consequence the proportion of small, woody shrubs often increases and annuals like the threatened buttercup *ranunculus* decline. Yet I couldn't

I descended to Cascade Creek and its large frost valley. These treeless valleys and hollows haven't been cleared; rather, cold air draining into them prevents young seedlings from establishing themselves on the valley floors by 'frosting' them out. These subalpine features are found only in Australia and some areas of Colorado, USA, where the cold air can accumulate regularly in the broad, gentle valleys. Other mountainous regions have much steeper mountains where cold air is better dispersed. Frost valleys are always fringed by snow gums and often seedlings can be found trying to intrude from the edges; these natural bonsai may be 25 years old and still in the seedling stage. It is worth noting that these areas experience severe frost for most of the year—it is not a very



*Michele Kohout at Tin Mine Barn, her lunch spot on the second day.
Below, a green stick insect living up to its name.*

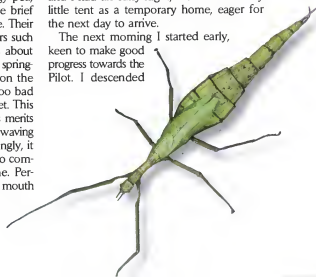
help but be fascinated by these lovely creatures. Just like the characters from the book, they roam where they choose. I guess this is still 'Man from Snowy River' country—literally—as it originates as a small trickle over the nearby Ramshead Range.

The Cascade Track is a wide management track and is very easy going. It was a tedious climb up Bobs Ridge and I distracted myself by looking at the native flowers that were still out. There were late flowering alpine *podolepis* (a daisy) and alpine shaggy pea, both trying to make the most of the brief summer period in which to reproduce. Their yellow colours attract insect pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Other insects about were the alpine spotted grasshoppers, springing away heavily as I passed them on the track. Fortunately, the flies weren't too bad that year and I didn't need the fly net. This 'veil' may look ridiculous but it has its merits and I have often been envied by arm-waving walkers on the Main Range. Surprisingly, it was the male of a passing couple who commented how he wished he had one. Perhaps the female chose to not open her mouth lest a fly dart in...

good idea to camp in them although I am still drawn to them and sometimes they are the only good, flat ground around for a camp-site.

On the first night I camped by Cascade Hut on the south side of Cascade Creek. The cleared area around the hut was a perfect camp-site, although it felt as though I hadn't walked far enough to justify stopping so soon—I had only walked about six kilometres. There weren't any other bushwalkers and I had an early night, reunited with my little tent as a temporary home, eager for the next day to arrive.

The next morning I started early, keen to make good progress towards the Pilot. I descended



only slightly, but it was enough for the vegetation to change from snow gum to alpine ash. The slopes on either side of the track became steep and the understorey dense with ferns. Now and then the undulating track would take me back into snow gums, for which I have a penchant. The lingering mist draped cobwebs in delicate droplets, making the usually invisible visible, and my quiet footsteps led to an encounter with a mare and her foal. I stopped and watched them until they moved off silently among the trees.

Just before reaching Tin Mine Huts I came across a large, green stick insect or phasmid. Outbreaks of these native insects occurred in alpine areas of Victoria and New South Wales in the 1960s and 1970s and their large-scale defoliation of eucalypts required major control programmes. They are fascinating insects as the adults not only look like twigs but their eggs resemble plant seeds. When they fall to the ground, ants take them into their nests but their outer covering is too hard for the ants to eat. The eggs remain in the even temperature of the ant nests, safe from other predators, until they hatch (looking a bit like ants), emerge and scramble up nearby trees.

I had morning tea at Tin Mine Huts and managed to linger so long that I decided to have an early lunch as well. Most likely it was a misguided attempt to lighten the load by eating some of it, although by the walk's end the pack somehow always seems to weigh the same, if not more! Even space in the pack is at a premium at the end of a walk: I still find myself trying to stuff camera and food in near the top.

European history of the Pilot region stretches back some 150 years although little evidence remains. Tin was mined sporadically between 1860–1939 in the area. In the 1870s the border between Victoria and NSW was surveyed and apparently a line of cairns still exists along the border. There are two huts in the cleared area of Tin Mine Huts, the bigger Tin Mine Barn and the smaller Carters Hut. Both survived the 2003 fires, probably due to being surrounded by a large expanse of 'marsupial lawn' (grass regularly grazed low by wallabies and kangaroos) that prevented the fire from spreading. The wooden

shingles on the roof of Tin Mine Barn are reported to be the oldest in the Kosciuszko National Park. Carters Hut was the home of Charlie Carter until 1953. He has been described as the last real hermit of the area, eking out an existence by mustering brumbies with only occasional trips into Jindabyne. I sat next to the huts and thought about the life he would have led; the seasons, weather and animals he must have seen and the hardship of such isolation. I very much enjoy my own company but that would not have been for me!

My day-dream was broken by a ranger doing some cycling recreation, returning to the hut to check that the fire his group had lit was definitely out. It was. It's funny that even out there one can succumb to the 'oven left on' syndrome...His paranoia was justified: as he said, imagine how bad it would be if a fire lit by a ranger started a bushfire! It was fortuitous that he had returned as he described the best way up the

Pilot. Just past the Tin Mine Huts the road forks and I continued to the west along the Tin Mine Track. When I was level with the saddle between the Pilot and Little Pilot I took the first gully on the western flank of the Pilot, noticing an arrow on a tree. The gully was mainly open snow-gum woodland and the walking was fairly easy, without many dead branches to clamber over.

As a botanist I always get excited by snow gums and, as I began to climb towards the summit of the Pilot, they became more gnarled, more twisted and, I hoped, more photogenic. When I reached the large rock-cave at the summit (1828 metres), I was disconcerted to see plumes of blue bushfire smoke far off to the south-west. I contemplated leaving the area, but up here with a view of the smoke and the fire's course I felt more comfortable than lower down. The

The lingering mist draped cobwebs in delicate droplets, making the usually invisible visible, and my quiet footsteps led to an encounter with a mare and her foal.



A dew-covered cobweb glints in the light.

wind was not blowing towards me and to be safe I decided to camp right on the bare area next to the cairn—not quite the nice, padded mattress of alpine grass I had planned on...My dinner of instant laksa noodles was eaten with a magnificent view all around me—to the north, the imposing Ramshead Range and to the south, Wombat Flat. What I had read was true: the view from this mountain is one of the most rewarding in the area because it is 400 metres above the surrounding land. That it is in a declared Wilderness Area somehow made the view even better. The evening was still and the hazy sky gradually became a sensational pink due to fires.

The wind picked up during the night and I woke frequently, dreaming of bushfires and at times thinking I could smell smoke. I am rarely nervous in the bush. Growing up camping and walking with my dad (see *Wild* no 98) had taught me that there is little to fear in the Australian bush if you are prepared and sensible. Nevertheless, snakes still fill me with a certain nervousness. A rather comical encounter with a cassowary in far north Queensland (we circled each other around a tree) unnerved me at the time. And though I hate to admit it, I do get a touch of the nocturnal spooks when there is rustling outside the tent and I am alone

with my imagination. A mouse can suddenly become that ex-circus panther which is supposedly sighted every now and then in various parts of Victoria. But bushfires are a very real danger due to their ferocity, speed and unpredictability. However, it is probably a danger not often considered by bushwalkers. I had read the story about a group encountering a large bushfire on McMillans Track in Vic-

lack of water. It was a pity as it's a bit of a treat to have home-made apricot, sunflower seed, currant, dried apple and banana porridge.

I had a late breakfast after I'd packed up and returned to the now familiar Tin Mine Huts. I wished that I had the time to explore to the west and maybe even descend to the small Murray River or find Tin Mine

disputiously I came across a large, flat clearing. Its two equine inhabitants kindly allowed me to spend the night there after much whinnying debate.

My tent was frozen in the morning and packing it up was like folding cardboard. After a quick breakfast I set off. When I met up with Cascade Creek, I realised that the bottom of my pants had lost the battle with the scratchy undergrowth. With the aid of a pocket knife, they became shorts. I walked along the creek looking for fish through the clear water. I love the sound mountain creeks make—the gurgling and rushing interspersed by still pools and even small cascades. Further up the valley I found myself back at Cascade Hut for lunch and began to dawdle as I realised the trip was coming to an end—it always comes too soon.

The last night I camped by the Big Boggy. The other couple I had seen previously were camped further south in the valley. I stared up at the great mass of the Ramshead Range to the north. Night came and I watched stallions fighting by moonlight, silhouetted in front of the range; it was the type of scene you see in films. Their thundering hoofs were loud in the tent and I hoped I hadn't camped on a thoroughfare of theirs. The temperature dropped to -7°C and the tent was once more frozen solid in the morning. It takes incredible will-power to wrest myself from my fluffy, warm cocoon inside the tent and see the morning light but it's always worth it. The valley was beautiful. There was not a cloud in the sky (no wonder it had been a cold night!) and small puddles were frozen.

I returned to the car at about the same time as the couple from further up the valley. It was good to see them as that morning



The author demonstrates her pants-into-shorts transformation near Cascade Hut.

toria (Wild no 74) and could imagine how difficult it would be not knowing the exact location of the fire and the fear of becoming hemmed in.

I awoke to a tent wet with melted frost. It was fantastic to be up so high and experience the first rays of sunlight as they warmed the land. The wind had changed, the smoke cleared and I felt much safer. I took some photos, sat and absorbed the views and eventually retraced my steps to the track below the Pilot. The only down side of camping on the Pilot is the necessity to carry water with you as none is available at the summit. Unfortunately, my morning porridge was out of the question due to

Falls. That would have to wait for another trip. As I began the return journey I didn't feel like retracing my steps completely and chose to walk along the Tin Mine Track to the site of Stockwhip Hut (it burnt down in the 2003 fires) and gradually headed north to meet up with Cascade Creek. A couple of walkers warned me about the dense scrub—I should have taken more notice of the fact that they were heading back to the Cascade Track...

I was back in alpine ash country with an incredibly dense understorey. Undeterred, I continued through the various gullies, finding horse tracks to follow along creeks. The afternoon began to fade and rather seren-



I had discovered a tick on the back of my shoulder and couldn't reach it. It must have fallen into my clothing during my tussle in the thick undergrowth the previous day. In the end it turned out to be dead and not burrowed into my skin; what a relief. I enjoy my solo walks very much and am happy not to talk to anyone for days and be alone with my thoughts but it's often comforting to know that someone is nearby in more remote areas.

I stopped at the Pilot Lookout on the way back and reflected on where I had been and what I had seen. The next trip would, I hoped, be to the east to explore The Chimneys. ☺

I RECENTLY ARRIVED BACK IN AUSTRALIA after living overseas for a few years. At the same time as I cashed in my foreign currency, I gave my vocabulary a good overhaul so that ideas from while I was away such as, 'I'd love to kayak around the Whitsundays' changed to 'I am going to kayak around the Whitsundays'. It was amazing how effective this was in putting old plans into action.

This wasn't a trip I'd ever envisaged doing solo and I considered whom I knew with a like-minded approach to being outdoors. I ran the idea of a two-week Whitsundays sea

kayaking trip past my friend Kieron and asked whether he was interested. His answer was short and to the point: 'Yes!' I don't believe that not having done something before is a reason for not doing it, so I immediately began to plan a trip for two people with limited kayaking experience. This continually pushed me out of my comfort zone—the down side was that I was usually the one who asked silly questions, looked uncoordinated and wondered whether it would be better to become an expert at just one thing.

On the trip the only moments of doubt occurred shortly after arriving at the Salty Dog Sea Kayaking depot in Shute Harbour after being picked up from our hotel by one of the owners. In terms of touring in a double sea kayak, at this point I was like Arnold Schwarzenegger at the beginning of *Twins*—tremendously knowledgeable in theory but completely lacking in practical experience.

After unpacking our gear from Hayley's car, I stood and looked at the yellow Econihz

kayak at the top of the public boat ramp with all our gear next to it (excluding 60 litres of water) and thought it looked about as likely as getting a whale into a teapot. 'No worries', said Hayley. Then I realised that the 'dry bags' provided were long, disposable plastic bags with a rubber band on one end. I tore the first one as I put it into the kayak and we asked for spares, wondering how any of these would last two weeks. 'No worries', said Hayley. Then the promised first aid kit wasn't there—no worries', said Hayley.

Everyone gradually disappeared from the boat ramp while we filled our water containers and packed. We eventually sealed the holds, put our skirts on and tried to lift the kayak: it was much heavier than we'd expected. While we were considering whether to unpack partly, a semi-trailer arrived at the ramp to load up from the rapidly approaching barge. We needed to move. 'No worries', we thought as we shifted more than our combined body weight diagonally down the

☞ The trip turned out to be as much about whom we met along the way as it was about stopping for lunch on deserted islands and paddling isolated coastlines with just the gasping sea turtles to remind us that we weren't the only beings in existence. ☞

PADDLING PARADISE

Sea Kayak



boat ramp, in the process learning where to pack a kayak. But as soon as we were on the water—where a kayak is designed to be—all our worries disappeared. Hayley was right: everything fitted in, the dry bags lasted for two weeks and the first aid kit was delivered to us the next day.

We paddled out the north-eastern entrance of Shute Harbour, the rising tide helping us to drift south. Navigation in the Whitsundays is mainly by line of sight unless it's seriously foggy or rainy, but in our two weeks this wasn't a problem. As we passed the northern end of Long Island we could already see the strip of sand that was our first night's campsite on Henning Island. It was an overcast afternoon and we enjoyed an easy crossing of the Whitsunday Passage with seas and swell of up to one metre and a five-ten knot breeze.

Before we slid off the boat ramp, Kieron and I had never kayaked together

and there was a risk of incompatibility. We're similar in height and weight, which usually guarantees a more compatible paddling rhythm. I have since learned that, particularly in a double, distance paddling is mainly about rhythm and maintaining a comfortable cruising speed and glide that gets topped up with each stroke. Technique is more important than brute strength. These elements, combined with our fitness levels, paddling

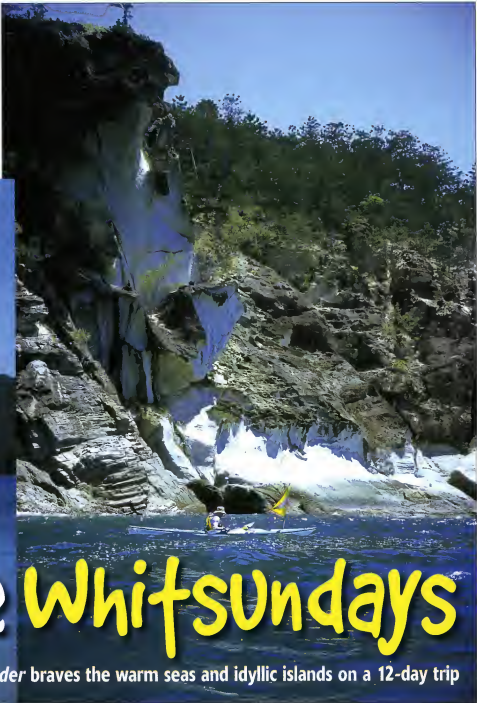
stamina and enthusiasm, meant that we paddled well together.

After crossing the passage, we got a burst of energy coming into Geographers Bay and powered on to the beach. We jumped out like excited children just as the sun came out, marched the kayak up past the high tide-mark and checked the GPS to find we'd travelled 17 kilometres in three-and-a-half hours. As I waded into the sparkling water for a



ing in the Whitsundays

Elsbeth Callender braves the warm seas and idyllic islands on a 12-day trip



*Peter Dobbs-Clements beneath spectacular rock formations on Hook Island. **Left**, an idyllic location: sea kayaks on Haslewood Island, Whitsunday Island behind. All uncredited photos John Wilde*

swim I had an overwhelming feeling of satisfaction.

Geographers Bay was deserted and the moon rendered our headlamps practically obsolete. The next morning a small yacht moored in the bay and a couple came ashore in a tender. 'Is that what you're travelling in?' they asked, before questioning us about carrying and finding water. They had approximately

Travelling by kayak is a great ice-breaker. People usually have a couple of spontaneous things to say and nobody is particularly intimidated by your new-found biceps and tan because you also have pink zinc cream smeared all over your face and wear a black rubber skirt. The trip turned out to be as much about whom we met along the way as it was about stopping for lunch on deserted

A yellow kayak is beached on a sandy shore. Various items are scattered on the sand around it, including a red life preserver, a white plastic bag, and other gear. The background shows a calm body of water and distant mountains under a clear sky.

Route taken National Park
 ① Camp-site (numbered by night) Not for navigation



If we'd give on the trip hoping not to bump into another soul we'd have been as frustrated as the tourists we found on Denman Island who'd considered buying plastic horror masks to ward off anyone who dared to visit 'their' island. We shattered their dreams of solitude with our own camping permits and an offer of Nutella they couldn't refuse. They were, in spite of themselves, sorry to see us leave the next day. However, we were amazed at how much of the place we had to ourselves, even during the September 'busy season'.

A large, rugged rock formation with a distinct columnar jointing pattern, likely basalt, situated along a shoreline. The rock is covered in patches of yellow and green lichen. A small boat is visible in the water at the base of the formation.

Rick Martin rounds Pinnacle Point, the north-east point of Hook Island. Left, it's amazing how much you can fit in a sea kayak! Surveying the grand expanse of One Foot Island, with Hook Island behind. Elspeth Callender

We were planning to stop for a night at Hook Resort but weren't psychologically ready to face civilisation. We backtracked on a turning tide (and with a tail wind) to the place we'd been told had 'nothing there'. Peter Bay is an eerily beautiful bay with a very different appearance to other parts of the Whitsundays. The mangroves, darker foliage and an array of driftwood that would make Tonia Todman weep create a certain sense

of foreboding. Kieron decided it was where everything in the Whitsundays came to die.

As the tide was still out when we made it to Peter Bay, we had to negotiate our way past rocks and coral carefully. We were then faced with dragging the kayak more than 100 metres up the stretch of exposed sand to the camping spot on the beach. We were so exhausted that when I suggested we sing a song to take our minds off pulling the kayak, Kieron—a musician—just looked at me and said, 'I can't think of one'. We hauled in silence. We set up camp and could hardly believe that



So you want to go too

Planning a trip

Inspired by the stories and photographs of my 12-day sea-kayaking trip around the Whitsunday Islands in September, a friend suggested she and I do a similar trip sometime. 'But you'll have to arrange it', she said. 'I wouldn't have the first clue about organising a kayaking trip.' I thought, 'Neither did I two months before I went to the Whitsundays'. This is how I went about it...

Getting skilled

My preparation really began with a one-day kayaking course on Sydney's Middle Harbour. We started by talking basic navigation and for the rest of the morning we were on the water practising basic strokes. By the end of the day we were in the water performing simulated rescues. I mentioned to my instructor why I was on the course and he jotted down names of relevant books and Web sites. Over the next few weeks I received emails from him full of information about Whitsunday weather, other Web sites to look at, advice on appropriate gear—and encouragement.

Gaining information

Gaining knowledge is just as important as buying the right gear. Talking to people about the trip was a great way to pick up incidental information as well as encouragement. It did, however, also leave me open to comments such as, 'I think you might have bitten off more than you can chew', but I learned to distinguish between constructive criticism and uninformed negativity. I found kayakers, people working in outdoors and map shops and the people from whom I booked the kayak the best people to talk to.

The rest of my research was mainly on the Internet. I found the New South Wales Sea Kayak Club Web site particularly useful, especially the personal accounts by members such as 'How to Destroy a Sea Kayak: A Step by Step Guide'. The Web site can be found at www.nswseakayaker.asn.au

Reference material

The 'Bible' of the Whitsundays, *100 Magic Miles* (seventh edition) by David Colfelt, is written in a chatty, humorous style. It's got great 1:40 000 aerial photographs and corresponding sketch maps, a fishing section and maps showing the exact location of designated camp-sites. If you don't want to invest in this fairly expensive book (more than \$60) there are other alternatives. When you book your island camp-sites, you'll be sent a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority pack with maps and park regulations and the tide chart for Shute Harbour, which has a list of fish sizes and bag limits on it. The Hydrographic Office chart I used was AUS 252, but AUS 253 is also suitable.

Gear

Most decisions for this trip were easy once I'd done some research, such as which EPIRB to buy and from whom to hire the kayak. The decisions that weren't quite right were not taking my own dry bags and not taking enough gas canisters for my stove; we were forced to enjoy a dish we called 'cold noodle, Parmesan and pine-nut salad'

on the last day. Although I didn't use the short-wave radio that I bought over the Internet I would still always take it.

Salty Dog provided a first aid kit, V-sheet, PFDs, extra paddles, disposable plastic dry bags, bailer, sponge, flares, whistle, pump, spray-decks, waterproof maps/charts and tide charts. These are all items to take if they're not provided. Tow-ropes can be expensive to buy, but the NSW Sea Kayak Club Web site provides information on how to make your own. Depending on the season, a stinger suit may be a good idea and can be bought or hired in Airlie. The things that were particularly useful were a pot scourer for washing-up in the sea, a clothes-line, insect repellent and bite/sting treatment, extra batteries, duct tape, rubber bands, and vinegar for the treatment of tropical cuts and stings.

Clothing

It's easy to be lulled into a false belief that Queensland is always hot. We were always comfortable in the kayak in one layer (long sleeves for the sun) but generally cold standing on the beach in wet clothes. A fleece and thermals were imperative and our +10°C sleeping bags not always adequate. In good weather our clothes dried in the sun when spread out on the beach.

Choosing a kayak

Probably the most difficult decision was whether to hire two single or one double kayak. Kieron emailed our dilemma to his friend Louis, a kayaker. Louis advised that we get singles for extra space for gear, to reduce the tedium of trying to paddle in sync and because Eskimo rolls are very difficult to do in a double. It was then that I realised that Louis didn't know that the team leader was not yet at Eskimo rolling standard. So I booked a double for stability, speed, communication, ease of fishing and the fact that we were in this together. It was the right choice for our trip.

Water

I was advised to use wine bladders for storing water and these five litre containers were great until they all leaked on the next kayaking trip. It's best not to rely on water at any of the camp-sites in the Whitsundays so take what you need or make alternative plans such as making friends with people in boats, asking at resorts or staying the night somewhere and filling up. Hook Island Wilderness Resort is a good place to get water if you're willing to stay a night, otherwise it may be more expensive to buy than the accommodation.

Food

I was surprised at how well fresh vegetables survived and found carrots, choko, garlic and onion to be fine for at least four days. Beans and lentils took too long to cook, but couscous, udon noodles and 'quick-cooking' pasta were great. A tube of basil lasted for at least four days. I used off-the-shelf parmesan, powdered coconut cream was lovely in rice, we ate porridge or muesli for breakfast, found that a tube of Vegemite with crackers was good for snacks, and small Nutella packs were great treats. Snap-lock bags with rubber bands around them were an excellent way to store opened packets of food as well as the rubbish.

later that night when the tide came in we would have water lapping metres from the tent and a lagoon behind us. After miso soup, I was so tired I fell asleep with half-chewed beans still in my mouth and Kieron, ravenous, ate the rest.

When we arrived at Hook Island Wilderness Resort the next afternoon, we were accosted on the beach by kayakers who didn't enquire about our mode of transport but had a lot of other questions. Then, as I walked through to the resort's reception desk I heard, 'Oh, that must be Elspeth'. 'Are you Elspeth?' 'Hi Elspeth!' and wondered what planet I had landed on where people either travelled everywhere in funny yellow pods or knew who I was. The assistant manager made it all clear when she demanded: 'Are you Elspeth? I've got a food package for you and I've been asking every single

person who comes in if they're Elspeth.' She was filling in for the owners that week and was a little too busy running things to smile.

Hook Island Wilderness Resort—far more like an eco-backpackers' than a resort—was a great place to stop for a night to wash clothes, have a shower, fill up the water containers, stare at yourself in the mirror as though you'd never seen your face before and have a good meal. Neill from Salty Dog had suggested we put together a bag of food that he would drop off at the resort to save us carrying

everything all the way. We enjoyed a great evening of socialising and eating while thick-knee birds (curlews) wandered around looking bug-eyed at us in disgust, making noises like the sea.

The next day we set off with the other kayakers. They were far more experienced than we were—we learned a lot from them, including how to carry a portable television, DVD player, folding chair and table on a single kayak. We also learned about paddling strokes, building kayaks, places to kayak, sea-kayaking politics and how tremendous and how tedious it can be to travel in a group.

Kieron and I had endless energy that day, perhaps from eating meat for the first time

March flies were relentless. We probably wouldn't have stayed the night there if we hadn't planned to walk up Whitsunday Peak the next morning for a sunrise breakfast overlooking the chain of islands—it was worth the thousand pricks we'd received by the time we left the bay.

As we paddled out of Cid Harbour on the morning of the tenth day of our trip, with the Whitsunday Passage still to cross, my back began to ache and I couldn't find any strength for my stroke. Fortunately, after about five kilometres I got a surge of energy in time to make up for the fact that Kieron suddenly couldn't maintain any sort of stroke rhythm and was so tired he didn't even

Facts and Figures

The islands

The Whitsunday Island group, part of the Great Barrier Reef, is the largest offshore island chain on Australia's east coast and is made up of more than 70 islands. The biggest islands, Whitsunday and Hook, are at the northern end of the chain.

Getting there

If not driving, fly to Proserpine or, alternatively, Mackay. At Proserpine, a group of minibuses meet each flight and you will be put on one to Airlie Beach, where most of the accommodation is. If hiring a kayak, a courtesy pick up from here may be possible if prearranged.

Supplies

The biggest Bi-Lo I've ever been in is on Shute Harbour Road in Cannonvale, to which you can walk from Airlie along the waterfront. There's a grocery shop on the main street of Airlie, and a good fishing shop that also sells snorkelling gear.

Hiring a kayak

Salty Dog Sea Kayaking appears to have a monopoly on kayak hire in the area and the owners were very helpful, answering all my silly questions as though they'd heard them for first time. Their Web site at www.saltydog.com.au has further details. There are other companies that arrange guided tours in the area including Sea Kayaking Whitsundays (www.seakayakingwhitsundays.com.au) and the Aussie Sea Kayak Company (www.ausseaseakayak.com.au).

Camping

Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS) allows camping in designated camp-sites only in the Whitsunday Islands National Park—pre-booking is required. QPWS provides a leaflet called 'Island Camping in the Whitsundays', or visit their Web site for more information. However, booking multiple camping locations is easier to organise by phone or in person. Camping fees are \$4.00 a person, a night. Their Web site is www.qld.gov.au/camping or phone (07) 4946 7022.

When to go

It can be cold in the Whitsundays in winter, but not necessarily ever too cold to swim. January–March is the wet season, March–May generally the windiest, August and September have the lowest average rainfall and temperatures from October just get higher. Stinger season is from October to May (depending on the year) with peak season along the Whitsunday mainland generally being March and April.



Kieron Hayter supervises the turning of the tide at Turtle Bay, Whitsunday Island. Callender

in a week, or the novelty of group travel, or the beauty of the northern stretch of Hook Island on a sunny day. We left the 'hard-core' kayakers at Maureens Cove because we were enjoying ourselves too much to stop. When the sun was thinking about setting, we realised that we hadn't considered the fact that the coral-lined western section of Hook Island was completely inaccessible at low tide and high tide wasn't until 11 pm. We didn't want even to consider resorting to Hayman (mind the pun) or inviting ourselves on to someone's yacht, so bobbed about while I fished *100 Magic Miles* out of the middle hatch to see on which island we might be able to park. Bird Island was out due to restrictions, Black Island due to inaccessibility, but the sandy strip off Langford Island, One Foot Island, looked promising.

One Foot Island is the eastern part of the sand bar attached to Langford Island and becomes its own entity when the tide is high. We'd done 30 kilometres that day and struggled to stay awake until 10.58 pm to check the water-level at high tide. We had the kayak packed for an emergency just in case, but from 10.59 pm we slept soundly on an area of sand about the size of a tennis-court. Camping is not permitted on One Foot Island so don't try this at home, but it's an amazing place to have a snorkel or a swim.

The only camping place that wasn't perfect was Sawmill Bay. It's a very popular mooring but not a pretty beach and the



notice. We finally arrived on Denman Island and lay straight on the coral beach like Elizabethan shipwreck survivors who'd finally found land. We had just learned why people take 'lay days'. Little did we know that two German tourists were only metres away with coffee and cake we would be devouring gratefully within the next hour. That night Kieron showed them how to see the glowing, white eyes of the spiders hiding in the coral by shining a torch on to the beach.

After 12 straight days of paddling and more than 200 kilometres, we slid up the slip at Shute as though we'd done it a thousand times. Within the week we found ourselves having coffee and teacake on Mt Tamborine with the kayakers we'd met at Hook Island Resort and the following month, on their suggestion, Kieron and I were paddling at Coles Bay in Tasmania. We had learned why people kayak everywhere they possibly can.

MILLET



MOUNTAIN BY EXPERIENCE



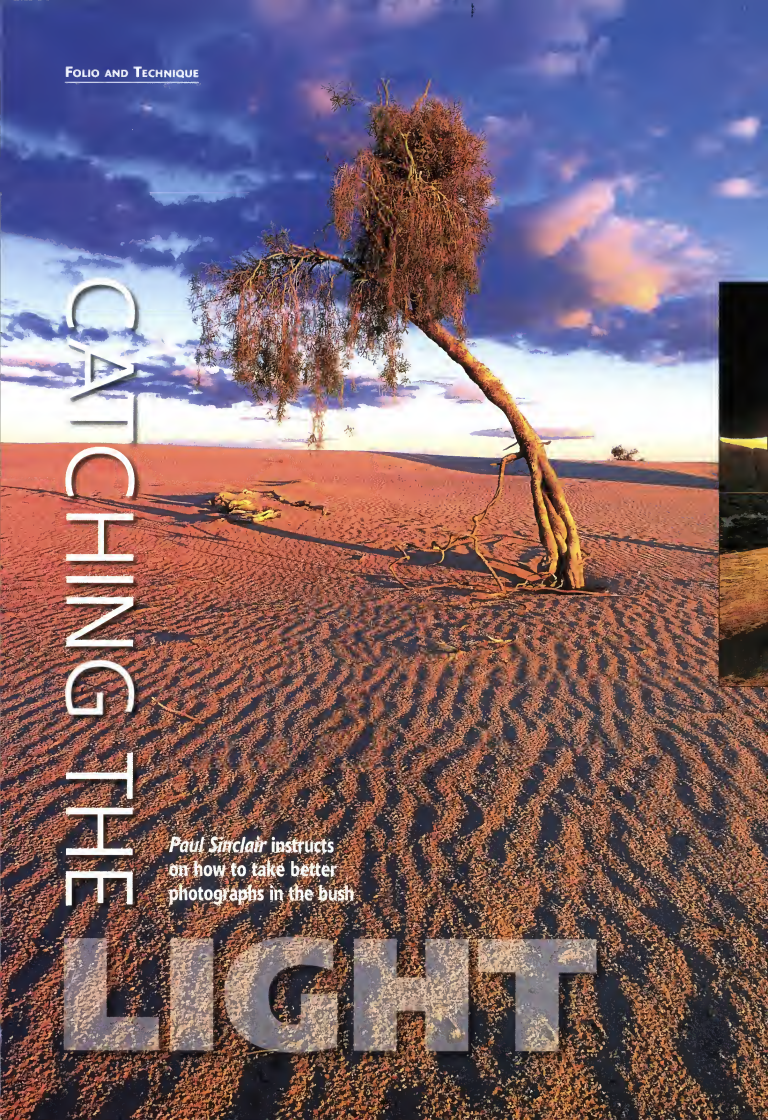
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FOLIO AND TECHNIQUE

CATCHING THE

Paul Sinclair instructs
on how to take better
photographs in the bush

LIGHT



ON AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPHIC TRIP TO MUNGO National Park I was standing at midday in a dust-storm squinting into the viewfinder at a barely recognisable tree. The shadowy outline jumped around crazily in a sepia-coloured world as I vainly tried to focus, close my eyes, spit out grit and stand upright. With my head filled with desert images from the film *Lawrence of Arabia* and my eyes full of dust I managed to take a few shots, convinced that the end results would justify the sandblasting of my new camera. Looking through the prints later I couldn't tell whether I was holding the picture up the right way. There was a lot of brown and some obscure

sweeping seascapes seemed boring when printed on a rectangle. It was as though I had been to one place and my camera to another. My initial belief that taking a good camera into an impressive landscape would automatically result in successful images was replaced by the realisation that the process was a little more complex.

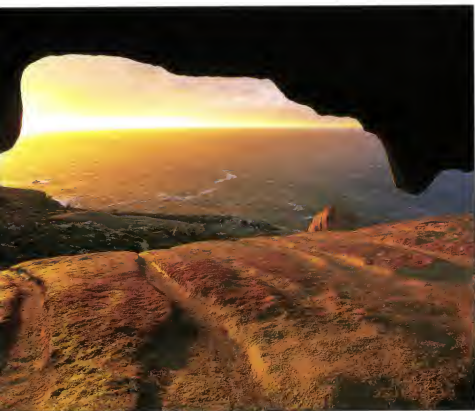
Improvements in my landscape images took place through experience and also by more extensive reading than that provided in the camera's instruction booklet. Information on general photographic techniques and equipment, such as those in previous issues of *Wild*, are a good starting-point for those

colour, removes texture and produces harsh contrasts. With the sun lower in the sky, richer colours play across natural features and patterns, revealing surface details.

Sand-dunes in particular need this softer light to have greater visual impact. The space and light of the desert can draw you in and then open you up—a good photograph can reflect this visually. When prominently placed at the front of the shot, sand-ripple patterns will draw the eye into the rest of the composition. Dead trees or boldly placed plants can have a similar effect and provide interesting contrasts in texture. A wide-angle lens is useful where a foreground needs emphasis and a sense of space is sought.

When sand-dunes dominate a picture the line of the dunes needs to be carefully balanced so that they don't dip to one side or create a confusing or unbalanced scene. A strong ridgeline or a section of a dune system can simplify a scene and make a more pleasing combination of line and colour. In sandy areas avoid messy footprints that create a distracting broken pattern. (If footprints appear in the frame, lightly throwing sand over them may be effective.) Choose the most promising angle on a subject and take shots from a distance before moving in closer. Strategically placed tree branches and rocks can work for those without objections to altering a natural arrangement. A walker heavily laden with photographic gear once cruised over, stomped around in the short space between me and a tree and, without a glance in my direction, trudged away across the sand, leaving me to contemplate the beauty of his size-12 boot prints.

The clear desert air often results in intense but short-lived sunrises and sunsets. It is essential to be in the right place for this brief period when the landscape is coated in red or golden light. This requires a close study of a map or a scout around before selecting a camp-site so that potential locations are



Left, the sand-ripple patterns draw the eye into this composition, the tree providing an interesting textural contrast; Mungo National Park, New South Wales. **Above**, catching the light in South Australia's Flinders Chase National Park. All photos by the author

There was a marked difference between what I remembered seeing and what the exposed film was bringing back home...It was as though I had been to one place and my camera to another.

smear that might possibly be a tree, but a similar shot could have been taken lying on my back looking up from the bottom of a muddy pond.

Similar disappointing images were common from subsequent bushwalking and cross-country skiing trips. There was a marked difference between what I remembered seeing and what the exposed film was bringing back home. Snow scenes looked too bright or a drab grey. Impressive waterfalls tumbling through green forests were reduced to white streaks against dark backgrounds. Grand,

whose photos don't quite seem to match their memory. It is also important to be conscious of the problems encountered and techniques required in different locations.

Desert and semi-arid regions are often places where iconic images of Australia are created. Sand, red rock, white gums and deep blue skies conjure up a sense of space and timelessness. The key to capturing these images successfully is to catch the best light. Early morning and late afternoon sunlight are better to photograph most subjects as the bright, midday sun often bleaches out

within striking distance. An early start or late return to the tent is often required. Not only will this maximise time in interesting locations but in popular spots there is less chance of other people featuring in your shots. Decide beforehand where the light is likely to fall on a distinctive tree, dune or other natural feature. Check where shadows may be cast across the subject. When composing the shot look at the subject from a variety of angles and try both vertical and horizontal formats.

While sand-dunes, trees, spinifex and rock are often effectively highlighted by deep

blue sky, this backdrop can become boring if used too much. Clouds can add greater interest and balance. Moving in close and filling the frame with the branches of a tree can also break up the sky. Another option is to angle the camera downwards and reduce the amount of sky in the top of the frame or remove it completely.

bury it in the middle of a rucksack insulated by clothing. Never leave film in hot places such as tents or outside pack pockets.

White, sculpted snowdrifts and contrasting trees transform the alpine landscape in winter. After fresh snowfalls this contrast is reduced as trees merge with the surroundings—when caught in the right light this makes for

will give an average reading that normally turns white snow, grey. To compensate for this while keeping the snow white, it is often necessary to overexpose from the meter by one to one-and-a-half stops. The amount of overexposure necessary depends on the brightness of the snow and how much of the frame contains low-reflection objects like



*A snow gum near Mt Nelse, the Victorian Alps, set off by the beautiful light, snow texture and brewing clouds. **Right**, the combination of a ghost gum, red rock and blue sky in the Watarrka National Park, Northern Territory, produces an iconic image of the Australian outback.*

As discussed, the harsh light later in the day will generally produce disappointing photos. However, it is possible to achieve unusual lighting effects in some locations. For example, in deep valleys and gorges reflected light from one rock wall can illuminate objects on the other. By moving into the shadows a purple or orange glow can be detected on boulders, rock formations and trees. In these situations slightly overexposing shots will help to catch the light in an unusual way.

Take particular care of film and equipment in hot, dusty locations. A weatherproof carry bag is an essential protection. Always use an ultraviolet filter to prevent lens scratches. To keep film cool, store it in a cooler bag or

memorable images. Ski-touring with a heavy pack and the extra weight of photographic gear makes it particularly important that this effort is rewarded with pleasing shots.

For some, the biggest challenge will be to leave a sleeping bag before dawn to be ready for a sunrise, which may or may not be visible. Apart from the usual clothing required in these cold conditions, a pair of thin gloves allows the camera to be operated while still retaining heat. Early and late light in the snow reduce glare, highlight wind-sculpted patterns and produce some interesting colours on the snow.

Correct exposure is the greatest technical challenge in this environment. Light meters

trees or rocks. To take account of this guesswork, 'bracket', or take a number of shots of the same scene at slightly different exposures. Less overexposure is needed in the softer light and more is required in the middle of the day, particularly if shooting towards the sun.

A polarising filter can help to cut down reflected glare and deepen the blue colour in the sky, thus creating greater contrasts, although care needs to be taken as this filter can turn the sky unnaturally dark. On overcast days overexposure is also required if features are to be highlighted and not lost in flat, murky tones. Fog and falling snow can create surreal atmospheres of shifting shapes.



A strong outline of trees is most effective in these circumstances.

While Australia doesn't have extremely cold conditions that can cause shutter problems or brittle film it is important to keep equipment in a dry, insulated place. This will help to ensure that battery power is not lost on very cold nights. A spare battery can also be carried in an inside pocket as a stand-by. Condensation can make shooting difficult. Avoid breathing on lenses or the viewfinder and have lens tissues handy.

On return visits coastal landscapes rarely look the same. Each tide reworks the ripples in the sand, washes up seaweed and shells, and tidal rivers constantly change course. Finely etched coastlines and empty stretches of beach filled with movement and light draw us to this dynamic meeting of land and water.

The inclusion of particular features and careful composition can introduce scale and, combined with colour and texture, lead the eye through the key elements. Lichen-covered boulders, tussocks of grass, sand patterns or driftwood are typical features that effectively 'anchor' a shot.

A wide-angle lens can emphasise these objects and still include the distant shore, cliff or headland. Check carefully for footprints or debris in the sand. I sometimes think a person gets paid to sit on a boat and toss

can be used creatively by waiting for a set with lines that complement other lines in the picture. A slow shutter-speed will blur waves as they break and soften the feel of the image. Sometimes foam swirling around rocks is effective; at other times as the wave sweeps away it leaves sand and pebbles glistening.

when a larger scene would be too flat and a white sky uninteresting.

Avoid exposing equipment to salt-water splashes and wind-driven spray. Leave the camera in its bag as much as possible and if the wind is blowing onshore check the lens as salt smears soon build up. Protect the lens



For some, the biggest challenge will be to leave a sleeping-bag before dawn to be ready for a sunrise, which may or may not be visible.

with a filter in case of accidents when moving around.

Majestic forests and waterfalls are popular walking destinations; however, they can also be the most frustrating to photograph. Lighting is the crucial factor. Apart from close-up shots of leaves with the sun shining through them, or tree canopy patterns, most shots in forests don't work well in bright sunlight.

On overcast days with thin cloud cover the sun can still produce bright conditions, making the light more diffuse and reducing contrasting shadows. This light brings out more saturated colours and is best in the middle of the day. With reflection and contrast reduced, creeks and waterfalls can be photographed without the whites being blown out and the details lost. A tripod is essential in the low light under a canopy of vegetation. A slow shutter-speed used with a tripod will create the soft, blurred effect often seen in images of moving water. Often film will record too much blue in these conditions, producing an image that doesn't match



The branches of this tree break up the sky in Mt Field National Park, Tasmania.

Top right, pandani in Cradle Mountain–Lake St Clair National Park, Tasmania.

odd thongs, beer cans and plastic bags overboard! Consider taking some of this rubbish away with you.

A standard or telephoto lens can be used for more graphic compositions with sharp contrasts made between land, water and sky. Waves

Close-up shots taken with a standard or macro lens of shells and rock formations convey a strong sense of place even though no water or 'beach' scene is included. Tight composition is needed to create a balanced pattern. This often works best on overcast days

the colours seen through the viewfinder. To correct this colour imbalance a 81A or 81B warm-up filter is required. These filters shift the colour to a 'warmer', yellow hue without changing the natural colours in a noticeable way.

Wet conditions, while more difficult to work in, bring out more colour and interesting reflective properties in plants. If these reflections are unwanted they can be cut with

of tree trunks or a more random arrangement of carefully selected branches. A large or distinctive tree in a more open area or details of bark or leaves on the forest floor are other possibilities. In foggy conditions compositions can often be easier as backgrounds are removed and a particular form or pattern can be focused on. Shots in these conditions can be very effective in portraying something of the mystery of trees.

In all locations the use of a tripod will improve the quality of the photographs taken. It allows more of the shot to be in focus by maximising depth of field, permits shooting in low light, helps to frame a composition more accurately and makes for sharper images. A tripod also allows slower film such as 50 ASA to be used. The fine grain means the photo is sharper and can be enlarged with little loss of clarity.

Spend time in a location to develop some sense of the place and find particularly strong subjects. Return to the same place at different times of the year and in different lighting conditions. Above



Marriners Falls, the Otways, Victoria. Left, one version of the 'dynamic meeting of land and water' in Ravine des Casoars Wilderness Protection Area, SA.

a polarising filter. A light, travel umbrella helps to keep the camera dry and avoids water droplets on the lens, which appear as blurry spots in the photograph.

The problem of taking a photo of a forest full of trees is that the trees fill the forest! In a tangled and confused shot the eye wanders around or slides off the image. In these circumstances, it is necessary to pick a strong highlight. This could be a repetitive pattern

Paul Sinclair

is a secondary-school teacher and landscape photographer who lives in Melbourne. The mysterious interplay between light and land continues to lure him and his camera into the outdoors, often accompanied by his daughter.



all, regardless of location, wait patiently for the best light rather than snapping and quickly moving on. Ultimately, it is at this point that the success of the photographs will be determined. The more time you spend waiting for the moment when all the key elements come together, the more likely it is that the image will capture something of the wonder that drew you into the outdoors in the first place. 📷

Klaus Hueneker has been exploring and writing about the Australian High Country for 40 years. This is his hymn of praise

I CELEBRATE NATURE, FOR CREATING THE mountains and the Great Dividing Range millions of years ago. Without that almighty upthrust and the carving down that followed we would not have so many different habitats and such a rich collection of animals and plants.

I celebrate the big picture. On a crisp, clear day I have stood on Australia's highest point and spied snow-covered Mt Bogong, 120 kilometres or more to the south. On another day I have done the reverse and seen Mt Kosciuszko from Mt Nelse, even further away on the Bogong High Plains.


There are many stunning vistas but the Great Alpine Road between Mt St Bernhard and Mt Hotham in Victoria has some of the best. The view over distant ranges, as well as frighteningly close abysses, changes every 100 metres. I either have to slow to a crawl to take it in or race through to prevent falling off the edge.

Top right, a snow gum on the Bogong High Plains, the Victorian Alps, bent over to become 'a pendulum of snow, ice and foliage'. **Paul Sinclair.** **Bottom right**, a bushwalker on Mt Fainter, the Bogong High Plains. Glenn van der Knijff. **Far right**, the detail and the vista: Mt Feathertop as seen from Mt Loch, the Victorian Alps. David Tatnall

I worship the detail. On the Bogong High Plains it was delicate, sun-loving mountain gentian and bunches of alpine celery hidden amongst large clumps of alpine mint bush. On the upper Snowy I've wandered amongst mountain plum pine sprawled over boulders,



Celebrating the



“I rejoice in the special places where, after walking for some time, I have an overwhelming sense of wanting to be very quiet, lie down and watch the clouds go by.”

Australian Alps

fresh red shoots of mountain pepper, and pink trigger plants poised to trap a tasty morsel.

I celebrate snow and ice, those matter-out-of-place phenomena in this parched, sun-burnt continent. Whilst working at a ski lodge, a big fall of snow covered all the windows. To let in some light I dug tubes through the snow bank to the sky. Some of the snow melted and created metre-long icicles; oversized kaleidoscopes presented a continually changing play of light and colour.

During a ski tour to Kosciuszko National Park's Mt Jagungal we were marooned at Mackays Hut by a metre of new snow. It fell softly during the night, cocooning trees, fence posts and the hut in a fairy-tale layer of super down. All we could hear was our heartbeats. Trying to ski in it was impossible.

On a walk up Mt Carruthers I was able to crawl through an icy tunnel. The creek

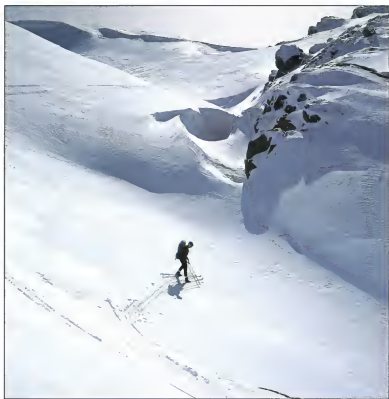
I rejoice in the special places where, after walking for some time, I have an overwhelming sense of wanting to be very quiet, lie down and watch the clouds go by. I have felt these vibrations amongst the snow gums near Ropers Hut, on a saddle of the Grey Mare Range, whilst climbing Mt Gingera in the Brindabellas, on a flat below the Cobberas and on the gentle slopes of Mt Speculation. Quiet meditation is usually followed by pitching camp, making a fire and boiling the billy.

I celebrate the wild animals. Skiing near Kiandra, New South Wales, I accidentally stopped on a wombat pad. The wombat didn't like me being on his patch, bared his teeth and growled. In imminent danger of being butted, I made way and let him through. Near the Bulls Peaks River in Kosciuszko National Park we came across an echidna doing it tough on the snow. It had no hope

wind in their sails. Then with a sonic 'whoosh whoosh' they'd shoot up, only to be reabsorbed into the main flock a moment later.

I celebrate snow gums, the tough, muscular Rodins able to endure winter fury and summer heat. During a blizzard the branches bend right over to become a pendulum of snow, ice and foliage on which only so much can cling. The overloaded ones snap and go off like gunfire.

Beyond the Bluff there is a magnificent old snow gum with many branches. Its spiralling, flexing arms rise out of a large, bulbous lignotuber which, if one were to dig deep, is probably fed by roots as convoluted and sinuous as the branches. The eight arms splay out in all directions, some almost touching the ground, to form a dome about 30 metres across. Others call it King Billy, to me it is the Shiva tree.



Left, Vera Matsinos celebrates the 'matter-out-of-place' phenomenon of snow in the Alps by skiing on it! She is near Mt Anderson, Kosciuszko National Park, NSW. **Right,** Neil Wilson, the author's companion for 20 years, having a full-body wash. Klaus Hueneker

had melted the snow from underneath leaving a vault of small arches within big arches. Here and there a pillar of snow touched the ground. Shades of yellow, green and purple light refracted through the snow, creating an ethereal world.

On Round Mountain, Kosciuszko National Park, we created our own vault to sleep in. Using a swordfish snow saw and our skis as rails to get rid of blocks of snow, we dug straight into a large cornice and hollowed out a chamber big enough for a small kitchen and three people. By late afternoon fog had rolled in, leaving us stranded in wet, woolly gossamer on the side of a cloud.

of digging in and could be picked up by an exposed pink leg.

I delight in the freedom of the birds. Near Victoria's Mt Fainter a small cloud of little ravens lifted off a rocky knob and rose into the blue sky like a gathering wave. At a certain high point the wave broke and they fell back to earth, and as they settled another flock about the same size took off from a different outcrop. They also rose and fell, rose and fell, and finally came to rest.

Occasionally a bird would bank slightly, the sun glinting off its blue-black wings. Some, perhaps the Jonathan Livingston Seagulls of the tribe, would fly so close that I could hear the

I celebrate the clarity of the night sky. On some nights stars hang as close as ballroom chandeliers. In late summer Orion slowly dips away to the north-west, the Southern Cross creeps along overhead and Scorpio climbs into view to the south-east. Orion's star-studded belt is a dead give-away and the twinkling Pleiades may just be visible in the north-west. By the middle of winter Scorpio has unleashed its tail and is directly overhead.

I celebrate the agony and the ecstasy of crossing icy rivers. Wading the flooded Tooma River in NSW on a long ski tour my companion, Ted Winter, chose to cross in boots,

trousers and all while I disrobed below the navel. At first the water was knee-deep, then it rose to more delicate parts and finally stopped just under my chest. On the other side Ted took off for Wheelers Hut while I pulled socks and trousers over frozen stumps. I found him half an hour later wrapped around a welcoming fire with all his clothes still on, steam rising from them. 'Would you like a cup of tea?' 'Would I ever.

Howqua—big enough for a tribe—and Fitzgeralds, strong enough to withstand a cyclone. I've used the huts to get warm, cook a meal, dry out wet clothes, recover from exhaustion, sing songs with friends, scribble notes for a book, sleep a night or two, and add meaning to my life.

I celebrate my companions. John Marsh invited me on a ski tour to Mt Tabletop and to get me up early would bring a cup of tea.



Wallace Hut peers through the snow gums on the Bogong High Plains. Tattall. Right, books that have inspired and informed. Hueneke

I celebrate comices, the standing waves of the high tops. Small ones are safe for a run, jump and land in soft snow; big ones may mean a ride into oblivion. The ones on the Kerries were fun; the one on Mt Nelse was serious. When skiing across below I stayed well clear. Large and small chunks had broken off and snowballed down the steep slope. The large chunks could have taken me with them while the small ones had etched delicate patterns into the pristine surface. Danger and beauty lay side by side.

I celebrate the mountain huts. The ones made of slabs stand out. In Kosciuszko National Park there's Wheelers Hut with its multipaned eyes squinting towards Mt Jagungal; Four Mile built by a recluse for a spot of rabbiting; and Coolamine Homestead with its outbuildings including a two-seater toilet where you could squat with a friend. In Victoria is Frys on the

Ted Winter taught me the value of a packet of dates, especially when skiing at night. Graham Scully always asked me a simple, caring thing—how are you feeling? Neil Wilson loved a full-body wash using a billy and a face washer, even in a crowded mountain hut. For 20 years we moved through the landscape as one. When he died, part of me died too.

I am uplifted by the writers and poets who have gone before me. David Campbell wrote of 'ice-trees burning'—perhaps the most evocative phrase yet written. Mark O'Connor was taken by the 'pubic-shaped fold in the hills', the place suitable for a mountain hut. Douglas Stewart had an eye

for 'spider gums' and Alan Andrews wrote of 'the day the mountain fell'. Elyne Mitchell was smitten for life. Tor Holth wrote about the cattlemen just in the nick of time.

I celebrate the photographers who opened my eyes. Charles Kerry took his cumbersome plate camera to the Hotel Kosciuszko and the Kiandra snowshoe carnival. Helmut Gritscher juxtaposed ski instructors at play and dead snow gums in a blizzard. Colin Totterdell spent hours on hands and knees capturing the world of flowers whilst Harry Nankin stepped right back and brought us photos of range upon range. Mike Edmondson and Ross Dunstan waited patiently for the five minutes of purple light at sunset.

I celebrate all the old-timers I've interviewed. Cecil Piper spoke of the hush before the dawn. Selby Alley told the story of 12 warm men, 17 frozen dogs below the floorboards, 11 shivering horses and 1200



Klaus Hueneke

has written nine books and produced numerous photographic essays about the High Country. His books include *Huts of the High Country*, *Kiandra to Kosciuszko*, *People of the Australian High Country*, *Kosciuszko—Where the Ice-Trees Burn* and *Huts in the Victorian Alps*.



sheep at Mawsons Hut. Tom Taylor kept pebbles in his pocket for counting stock; whenever another 100 had gone through a gate he transferred a pebble to the other pocket. Bill Hughes, the miner's son from Kiandra, led a group of Sydney doctors on the first winter journey from Kiandra to Mt Kosciuszko.

I celebrate the men and women who built the Kiewa and Snowy Mountains schemes and provide me with power to cook breakfast and dinner. They built the Alpine Way and the roads across the high plains that we enjoy today. They created the dams that supply the water for the food we eat.

I celebrate the rangers and park staff who work long and hard to keep it in pristine condition. They caretake whilst I partake. They do while I dream.

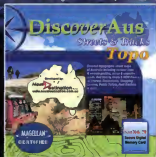
I celebrate the mountains for giving my life a purpose, a place in the bigger scheme of things. ●

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Victorian high peaks

Classic ridge walking up Mt McDonald and the surrounding Great Dividing Range,
by *Glenn van der Knijff*

TUCKED AWAY IN A WESTERN POCKET OF THE ALPINE NATIONAL PARK are a series of five prominent and, at times, testing summits straddling the Great Dividing Range. The peaks—Mt McDonald, the Nobs, High Cone, Square Top and Mt Clear—offer extensive views, each providing a different perspective of the Jamieson and Macalister River watersheds and peaks in between. This rewarding three-day walk traverses all five mountains and is generally of a moderate grade, although the ascent of Mt McDonald is rated as hard. There's also a lot of ascending and descending, some of it steep, which can be taxing for novice walkers. The four-hour drive from Melbourne through the farming town of Mansfield—the last 40 kilometres on gravel—deters a lot of visitors, but this means that you could well have this extremely scenic part of the Victorian Alps to yourself!

While the remoteness is one of the major draw-cards of this walk, there's also an element of challenge as the ascent of Mt McDonald entails some scrambling and the negotiation of one exposed crag (see warning). But don't be deterred: confident and

experienced walkers will enjoy the exciting climb of Mt McDonald, while the rest of the walk is filled with broad vistas, beautiful forests and scenic highlights at nearly every turn.

When to go

As snow covers the summits during winter, the warmer months from late spring to April–May are best for walking. The weather is generally warm (although considerably cooler as May approaches) and fine days are common during the height of summer. However, you should always be prepared for cold and wet conditions. There's a profusion of wild flowers in early summer.

Warning

The few potential dangers of this walk occur on the first part of the trip, on the ascent of Mt McDonald. The route is generally straight-



of the Great Divide

forward but there is one large and exposed crag that necessitates a scramble up a steep rock slope. Other smaller bluffs near the summit may also entail a small amount of scrambling. All difficult areas are fairly easily negotiated on the ascent but would be much harder to descend—they'd be problematic in wet conditions. For these reasons it is strongly advised not to complete this walk in the opposite direction.

Access

Take the Mt Buller Road from Mansfield and turn right on to Howqua Track after about 20 kilometres, just

Stephen Hamilton enjoys the extensive views from Mt McDonald. Both photos by the author

past the small village of Merrijig. Follow this gravel road through the large Sheepyard Flat camping area where the road narrows and becomes Brocks Road. Eventually you'll reach a three-way road junction at Eight Mile Gap, 57 kilometres from Mansfield. Turn right and descend to the Jamieson River valley. A short way up the valley you'll see the Low Saddle Road turn-off to the right. Leave vehicles at the clearing beside the southern bank of the river.

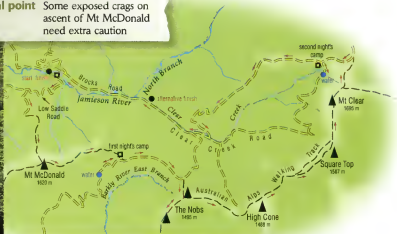
If your party has another vehicle, consider leaving it closer to the base of Mt Clear to avoid a three-and-a-half kilometre road-bash on the last day. Drive up Brocks Road for a further three kilometres to where Clear Creek Road joins on the right. About 500 metres up Clear Creek Road is a grassy camping area on the left, adjacent to Clear Creek.

The walk AT A GLANCE

Grade	Medium (hard on ascent of Mt McDonald)
Length	Three days
Type	Mountain scenery, great views
Region	Victorian Alps (south-east of Mansfield)
Nearest town	Mansfield
Start, finish	Jamieson River/Low Saddle Road junction
Maps	Vicmap Shene North 1:25 000 and Tamboritha-Moroka 1:50 000
Best time	Late spring/summer/ autumn
Special point	Some exposed crags on ascent of Mt McDonald need extra caution

The walk

Leave the tranquil waters of the Jamieson River North Branch and stroll up Low Saddle Road. After about two kilometres there is an overgrown four-wheel-drive track heading up the ridge from the south side of the road. (As of May 2005 Low Saddle Road was in good condition and it would be possible to drive to this point—there's room to park two-three vehicles on the bend.) Leave Low Saddle Road and follow the old track, which soon becomes scrubby and deteriorates into a hard-to-



Mt McDonald and surrounds

Vehicle track ———
Walking track - - -
Camp-site ■
Not for navigation. Use listed maps



MOUNTAIN DESIGNS



I'd rather be...
backcountry

Numbus Jackets • 19mm seam tape allows more breathability • Hood zips away into velour-lined collar with chinflap • Pit zips give ventilation with less bulk • Double-flap front closure protects from the worst storms • Articulated elbows • Draw cords at waist and elliptical hem, one-hand operation • Two external 3D cargo pockets • External altimeter/snack pocket • Internal pocket • Hood accommodates a helmet • Reflective trim
Alpnettes • High cinched waist to keep powder out • Full-length side AQUAZIPS maximise ventilation and speed easy on/off over boots, skis and crampons • Snug ankle snow cuffs clip to laces and stay put • When nature calls, drop seat functions without removing braces or jacket • Thigh-mounted cargo pocket is clear of climbing harness and leg flex zones • Reinforced seat and ankle scuff pad

Gear for places you'd rather be...

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Claremont, Fremantle, Garden City, Whistler City NZ Auckland, Christchurch, Nelson,Rotorua, Wellington www.mountaindesigns.com



follow path. This heads over the top of a minor spur and into a shallow saddle before climbing a prominent knoll and into a deep saddle. The path is difficult to find at times, but at the second saddle the way ahead is more obvious. Continue uphill and on to the increasingly prominent and attractive spur.

At about 1250 metres elevation you'll encounter a rocky bluff that at first appears unassailable. Wander right a little near the base of the crag, following evidence of a foot-pad, and locate the route through the buttress; the crux consists of a steep rock ramp which leads through the hardest part. This small section is quite exposed and may be difficult to ascend when wet and slippery, but in dry conditions it's a fairly easy scramble for experienced walkers with a good sense of balance. Beyond the crag the route is still very steep but fortunately the ascent is straightforward and the grade eases considerably as you approach the summit. The woodland also thins, giving great views framed by contorted snow gums. Clamber over a couple of smaller bluffs (mostly just a few metres high) before you finally reach the summit of Mt McDonald (1620 metres). From here, there is a full 360 degree vista. This grandstand viewing point is also an exceptional place to linger over a long lunch while marvelling at the magnificent scene below.

Between Mt McDonald and Mt Clear the route undulates mostly between 1300 and 1600 metres, the vegetation ranging from snow-gum forest at lower elevations to more open, rocky ground on the peaks. Leave the summit by heading east along the Australian Alps Walking Track (AAWT), which generally keeps close to the rocky crest. The track descends but there are still good views, particularly to the north over the Jamieson River valley. About two kilometres from the summit, atop a small tree-covered knoll, the track veers east, descends away from the prominent ridge and soon becomes an old four-wheel-drive track. Lower down, as the grade levels off, is a lovely camp-site on your right. Camp here, or walk a further 300 metres east to a junction with a vehicle track in an indistinct saddle where there's another camp-site. Water can be found about one kilometre down the vehicle track on the southern side of the range at the second major gully. (In May 2005, after a very dry autumn, this gully was dry, but water was found at a small spring—barely a trickle—200 metres further along the track; we needed a tube to siphon the water. You may find water even further down this track if necessary.)

Day two

The vehicle track undulates east along the range and after about two kilometres it climbs a little, then swings to the north-east. At the bend locate the foot track, marked as the AAWT, as it climbs up the slope to the south. The route is occasionally indistinct but climbs straight up the spur to reach the prominent northern summit of the Nobs (1495 metres). The southern summit, 700 metres away, has more extensive views. The ridge here is dominated by aged snow gums stunted and twisted by gusty winds and the bitter winter cold.

Back on the north peak, the AAWT drops steeply east into a saddle, followed by one-and-a-half kilometres of easy walking. Ascending the western verge of High Cone you have the choice of two routes; a short cut which bypasses the peak, or the tougher but more scenic (recommended) route over the summit of High Cone (1488 metres). Take in the views from this lofty perch.

As is typical on this walk, the route drops away steeply from the summit. The short-cut track joins where the grade eases, then the route passes through a park-like snow plain before climbing to the western shoulder of Square Top. Just before the final climb to the summit, the main AAWT veers left and takes an easier route as it sidles around the north-west face of Square Top. Again, the recommended route is to cross the peak itself. In good weather the walk over the summit plateau of Square Top (1587 metres) is a delightful stroll, but in foggy conditions it's probably best to follow the AAWT.

An open, grassy lead drops north from the summit. Take a breather in the saddle north of Square Top before the final climb of the day begins. Approaching Mt Clear along the clearly defined spine of the Great Dividing Range, the expanse of peaks and valleys again opens up around you. At the broad summit, after a tussle with more steep slopes, it's a relief to know you've attained the highest point of the walk (1695 metres), marked by a small rock-cairn.

The route continues north-east to a slight saddle 500 metres from the summit, then heads north to the prominent northern peak of Mt Clear. From this point the track plunges steeply north-east to a saddle where you'll meet a four-wheel-drive track. Turn west here



A camp-site on the southern summit of the Nobs comes complete with this sensational view.

and follow the track for one kilometre as it sidles around the northern slopes of Mt Clear to reach yet another saddle. This is a pleasant spot to camp (among some old cow-pats, admittedly) with water available 500 metres to the south along an old vehicle track. (The track isn't obvious in the saddle, but it leads to the reliable headwater of Clear Creek.)

Day three

With flat terrain and descent on the agenda for the final day, an easy stroll completes the walk. Head west along the lightly wooded ridge on to the four-wheel-drive track, fortunately little used here. After a few kilometres the track veers to the south-west and begins its descent towards Clear Creek valley. It passes through a couple of saddles before zigzagging through dry forest to the valley floor. (The *Tamboritha-Moroka* map shows a track heading west-north-west from the main track at a prominent bend not far above the valley. This is not a suitable short cut—I've tried it—as the track is heavily overgrown and difficult to follow, particularly near the creek.)

Turn west in the valley and amble down Clear Creek Road to a bridge over Clear Creek itself. From this point it is five kilometres back to Low Saddle Road, following Clear Creek Road then turning left and walking along Brocks Road. If you left a second vehicle beside Clear Creek (see access), you'll only have to walk one-and-a-half kilometres to the end of your journey. 📍

Glenn van der Kniff grew up in the Victorian Alps where he developed an insatiable interest in mountain recreation, particularly cross-country skiing and bushwalking. He's skied in Canada, the USA and Europe, trekked in Nepal, lazed on the beaches of Thailand and the Cook Islands, and travelled extensively throughout Europe. But his real passion is still for the High Country of Victoria.

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RUCKSACKS FOR BUSHWALKING

Nick Byrne surveys this essential piece of equipment

Wild Gear Surveys: what they are and what they're not

The purpose of *Wild Gear Surveys* is to assist readers in purchasing specialist outdoors equipment of the quality and with the features most appropriate for their needs; and to save them time and money in the process.

The cost of 'objective' and meaningful testing is beyond the means not only of *Wild*, but of the Australian outdoors industry in general and we are not aware of such testing being regularly carried out by an outdoors magazine anywhere in the world. Similarly, given the number of products involved, field testing is beyond the means of Australia's outdoors industry. *Wild Gear Surveys* summarise information, collate and present it in a convenient and readily comparable form, with guidelines and advice to assist in the process of wise equipment selection.

Surveyors are selected for their knowledge of the subject and their impartiality. Surveys are checked and verified by an independent referee, and reviewed by *Wild's* editorial staff. Surveys are based on the items' availability and specifications at the time of the relevant issue's production; ranges and specifications may change later. Before publication each manufacturer/distributor is sent a summary of the surveyor's findings regarding the specifications of their products for verification.

Some aspects of surveys, such as the assessment of value and features—and especially the inclusion/exclusion of certain products—entail a degree of subjective judgement on the part of

the surveyor, the referee and *Wild*, space being a key consideration.

'Value' is based primarily upon price relative to features and quality. A product with more elaborate or specialised features may be rated more highly by someone whose main concern is not price.

An important criterion for inclusion is 'wide availability'. To qualify, a product must usually be stocked by a number of specialist outdoors shops in the central business districts of the major Australian cities. With the recent proliferation of brands and models, and the constant ebb and flow of their availability, 'wide availability' is becoming an increasingly difficult concept to pin down.

Despite these efforts to achieve accuracy, impartiality, comprehensiveness and usefulness, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and for the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.

WHETHER YOU ARE 'HAULING THE MOTHER load' or keeping the weight of your weekend pack as low as possible, your pack is the one piece of equipment to ensure that you and your gear comfortably reach your goal; ideally without noticing you're wearing it. This survey evaluates rucksacks for bushwalking in Australia for trips lasting from one night through to multiday, extended bushwalks. All models surveyed are widely available at specialist outdoors shops throughout Australia.

Best suited for

The passions of those who play in the outdoors are as diverse as Australia's cli-

Left, the Osprey Crescent 85 has sufficient capacity for extended walks.

Below, your pack must have room for all the essentials! Grace Bunton carries Libby the bear through Herods Gate, Walls of Jerusalem National Park, Tasmania. Stephen Bunton



Rucksacks for bushwalking

Best suited for	Volume, litres	Weight, grams	Back lengths available	Main material	Internal compartments	Harness	Durability	Water resistance	Value	Comments	Approx price, \$	
Berghaus China www.berghaus.com												
C7 1	W/E	75	2560	S-L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●1/2	●●	●●●	Sleeve for hydration bladder; rain cover included; C7 1 Lady is 70 litre, women's model	280
C7 Pro	E	80	3070	S-L	Synthetic	1	●●	●●	●●●	●●	Welded and taped seams; removable front pocket; available in women's model	480
Black Wolf China www.blackwolf.com.au												
Mountain Ash	W/E/E+	45-85	2100	S-L	Synthetic	2	●1/2	●●	●●	●●●	Available in five sizes; rain cover	160
Bugaboo	W/E	60-70 (+10)	2500	S-L	Synthetic	2	●1/2	●●	●●	●●	Rain cover	220
DMH China www.dmh.aust.com †												
Rhinc	W/E	75	1900	S-L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●	●	●●	Sleeve for hydration bladder; also available in 55 and 65 litre models	130
Ambassador	W/E	75	2000	S-L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●	●1/2	●●	Sleeve for hydration bladder; built-in rain cover; harness cover	160
Explore Planet Earth China www.explorepianetearth.com.au †												
Exodus	W/E	65-75	2100	S-L	Synthetic	2	●1/2	●●	●1/2	●●	Hydration compatible; rain cover	220
Fairlydown China †												
Endavour	W/E	60-70	2400 (M)	W, M, L	Canvas	2	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●		350
Phoenix	E	70-80	2700 (M)	W, M, L	Canvas	2	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●	Stretch lid	400
GoLite Vietnam www.golite.com †												
Trek	W/E	65 (+11)	910 (M)	S, M, L	Synthetic	1	●●●	●●	●●	●●	Very lightweight	275
Kathmandu Vietnam www.kathmandu.com.au												
Vanguard	W	60-65	1900	M, L	Synthetic	1	●●	●●	●●1/2	●		440
Vardo	E	70-75	2400	M, L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●	●●	●		480
Lowie Alpine China www.lowialpine.com												
Cerro Torre	W/E	55-75	3100	S-L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●●	●●1/2	●●	Hydration compatible; rain cover	400
Contour	E/E+	60-80 (+15)	3000	S-L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●●	●●1/2	●●1/2	Zip-on day pack; rain cover	400
Macpac China www.macpac.co.nz												
Tekapo 45+	W	43-47	2250 (L)	M, L	Canvas	2	●●	●●●	●●●	●●	Hydration compatible	300
Traverse	W/E	65-75	2800 (XL)	M, L, XL	Canvas	2	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	Female model is the Spirit	400
Cascade	E/E+	85-95	3100 (XL)	M, L, XL	Canvas	2	●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●	Male and female harnesses available	530
Mont Fiji www.mont.com.au												
Aero	W	70	2750	W	Canvas	2	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	Women specific; hydration compatible	440
Monolith	E/E+	80-85	2750	M, L	Canvas	1	●●	●●●	●●●1/2	●●●	Hydration compatible	440
BackCountry	E/E+	80-85	2850	M, L	Canvas	2	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	As above	470
Mountain Designs Vietnam www.mountaindesigns.com												
Bibbulmun	E	65-75	2755	S, L	Synthetic	2	●●●	●●	●●	●●●	Built-in rain cover	300
Foxtie	E	65-75	2500 (L)	S, L	Synthetic	1	●●●	●●	●●1/2	●●●	Lightweight alpine-style pack	360
Main Range	E	65-75	2900	S, L	Canvas	2	●●	●●1/2	●●1/2	●●1/2		400

mate, ranging from lightweight, overnight bivvies, exploring and botanising for three or four days, to extended walks of more than a month. This survey categorises packs according to the trip lengths for which they're most suitable, identifying appropriate models for weekend bushwalks (W; smaller than 70 litres), three to five day adventures (E; 70-85 litres), and trips of more than five days (E+; bigger than 85 litres). However, suitability is not limited to size. It is important to focus on your needs when purchasing a new pack. Are you attracted to streamlined, simple designs for moving through tight bush? Do you find yourself base camping or doing side-trips and require a day pack for carrying a camera, water and a jacket

Buy right

Choosing the right pack for your bushwalking needs is, like all gear decisions, heavily influenced by budget, planned use and best fit.

- Use the volume given as a guide for narrowing your choices as there are certain items that you must fit into your pack such as food, clothing and equipment. When you have only a couple of packs on the short list, remind yourself that the bigger the pack, the heavier it will be, regardless of your best intentions!
- After researching through the Internet and in print, be sure to visit specialist

outdoors shops and talk with the staff. Most staff have good knowledge of how their equipment fits the needs and individual body shapes of customers.

- When trying rucksacks on be sure to load them to a weight similar to that you will carry. If you are uncertain of the load provided in shops, take your own equipment and get a feel for how it fits in your pack and on your back.
- Some shops also provide hire packs. Try to test the pack for its intended use. This is the best way to find out whether it meets your needs.

Rucksacks for bushwalking continued

	Best suited for	Volume, litres	Weight, grams	Back lengths available	Main material	Internal compartments	Harness	Durability	Water resistance	Value	Comments	Approx. price, \$
One Planet Australia www.adventureone.com.au												
Mungo	W	55-65	2300 (M)	WS, WM, M, L	Canvas	1	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●●	Simple and clean for minimal fuss; good range of harness sizes; chiropractic-endorsed harness	340
Styx 2	E	65-80	2500 (M)	WS, WM, M, L	Canvas	2	●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Good range of harness sizes; chiropractic-endorsed harness	390
Strzelecki	E	70-80	3100 (M)	WS, WM, M, L	Canvas	2	●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	As above	500
Osprey Vietnam www.osprey.com												
Atmos 50	W	50	1380 (M)	S, M, L	Synthetic	1	●●●	●●●	●●/2	●●●		330
Aether 60	W	60	1790	M, L	Synthetic	2	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●	Heat-mouldable hip-belt; also available in 75 and 90 litre models	350
Crescent 85	E+	85	3200	M, L, XL	Synthetic	2	●●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	Heat-mouldable hip-belt; also available in 70 and 110 litre models	600
Roman China www.roman.com.au †												
Bribe	W/E	50-75	2400	S, M, L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●	●●	●●	Rain cover	170
Snowgum China www.snowgum.com.au												
Neo	W	55-65	1800	S, M	Synthetic	2	●●	●●	●●	●●	Designed for those with a shorter back length	130
Summit Gear Australia www.summitgear.com.au †												
Rivergum	W	50-55	1800	S-M, M-L	Synthetic	1	●●	●●●	●●	●●●	Drain holes for canyoning	220
Korowal	W/E	70-85	2100	W, M, L	Canvas	1	●●	●●●	●●●●	●●●	Simple, light and functional	400
Tatonka China www.tatonka.com †												
Luna 45	W	45	2000	S-L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●●	●●	●●	Women's harness	200
Yukon 70	E	70	2700	S-L	Synthetic	2	●/2	●●●	●●	●●●		230
Kimberly 70	E	70	2700	S-L	Synthetic	2	●/2	●●●	●●	●●/2		300
Vango China www.vango.co.uk †												
Contour 80	E+	80 (+10)	2000	S-L	Synthetic	2	●	●	●●	●●		120
Sherpa 60	W	60 (+10)	2300	S-L	Synthetic	2	●●	●	●●	●●	Expanding side pockets; detachable rain cover	135
Pumori 70	E	70 (+10)	2500	S-L	Synthetic	2	●	●	●●	●		220
VauDe China www.vau.de												
Astra	W/E	65-75	2250	W, S, L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●	●●	●●		200
Profile 70	W/E	70	2750	W, S, L	Synthetic	2	●●	●●	●●	●●	Integrated rain cover; harness requires pocket knife with screwdriver to adjust	280
Wilderness Equipment Vietnam www.wild-equipment.com.au												
Breakout †	W/E	70-75	2900 (M/L)	S/M, M/L	Canvas	1	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●●	Simple and durable canvas option	290
Freyficht	E	70-80	3200 (L)	WS/S, M, L	Canvas	2	●●●	●●●●	●●●	●●●●		440
Lost World	E+	90-100	3400 (L)	WS/S, M, L	Canvas	1	●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	Best pack for professional guides and extended expeditions	480

● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent **Best suited for:** Extended walks of up to five days, E+ extended walks of more than five days, Weekend trips **Volume:** where more than one size of a model is available, the smallest and largest rucksack volume is given. Figures in brackets are the extra capacity of a fully extended pack **Weight:** if not identified, is smallest size available **Back lengths available:** all the packs surveyed allow for adjustments to the back length of the harness. S-L indicates one adjustable harness size ranging from small to large. Women's size, WS women's small, WM women's medium, XL extra large † not seen by surveyor ‡ not seen by referee **The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made**

when exploring? Or do you want a pack that organises your gear into compartments and has a built-in rain cover? Carefully consider your needs and the type of pack required. Refer to the 'Buy right' box for more tips on choosing a rucksack.

Volume

The volume of a pack is expressed in litres, with all figures supplied by manufacturers or distributors. Volume is not easily compared, as methods for measuring aren't consistent between manufacturers. Stuffing the same bushwalking load into a range of packs should clearly identify any discrepancies between brands and the volume supplied.

Weight

The weight was also supplied by manufacturers or suppliers.

While it is important to limit the overall weight you carry, features of the pack, the harness design, and the intended end use of the pack can produce products that vary by up to 2000 grams. I know you're saying, 'Hang on, two kilograms. That's equivalent to a waterproof jacket and a down sleeping-bag, or enough rice to feed me for 20 nights!' However, it's important to focus on where that weight comes from. Analyse the design and intended use of the pack. Is the harness designed to carry loads of more than 25 kilograms? Does the pack have a



The Strzelecki, a canvas pack from One Planet.

zip-off day pack, multiple internal compartments and a hydration bladder? Would anybody eat rice for 20 nights, anyway?

Back lengths available

Once you have decided on the desired volume of your pack, ensuring it fits your back length is crucial. There are a variety of designs, from fixed-length harnesses to fully adjustable models, (see text box on harnesses for more information) to address this requirement. While some harnesses fit particular

body shapes better than others, establishing the right back length enables you to analyse whether the harness is functioning as it should on your back. Good shop staff will be able to help.

Main material

The main considerations for pack material are waterproofness and durability. Historically Australian packs have used a blended yarn of polyester and cotton known as canvas. Influences from Europe and the USA, where rucksack sports are commonly conducted in drier, higher alpine environments, have resulted in an increased use of synthetics such as nylon- and/or polyester-based fabrics.

A blend of approximately half cotton and half polyester, canvas is commonly treated with polymers and waxes, and sometimes with antifungal agents. Canvas is more expensive than its entirely synthetic counterparts and is regarded as more waterproof. As a general rule, nylon and polyester based fabrics are more abrasion resistant and consequently better suited to rocky environments. These synthetic fabrics are waterproofed through a coated laminate, usually of polyurethane.

Ripstop is a common process achieved during the manufacture of pack fabrics where an additional nylon cord is woven into a grid pattern across the fabric. The idea is that if the fabric tears, when it hits stronger nylon the rip will stop, preventing more damage.

Manufacturers use different fabrics throughout the pack. In heavy-wear areas higher denier synthetic fabrics are used—most canvas packs use synthetic fabrics for this purpose too. In areas of the pack where weight savings can be made without sacrificing durability, lower denier synthetics and Ripstop treatment are commonly used.

Internal compartments

Packs with two compartments can be accessed through the top of the pack or a zipped entry point at the bottom, allowing easier access. However, this zip is a possible entry point for water and is also a potential weak point.

Harness

This rating is subjective, based on the author's experience with bushwalking packs. It is based on features (25 per cent), function (25 per cent), design (25 per cent) and fit (25 per cent). Different packs may better suit different body shapes so try several models before purchasing. Shoulder-straps should curve evenly, fitting the shape of the upper back and shoulders to prevent pressure points. Vertical rods direct weight to the hip-belt, from where it is distributed to

the pelvis, the main structure for bearing weight. The waist-belt should fit the hips well and be stiffened, preventing pinching and puckering. The padding should be comfortable and firm and posture 'normal', not dragged backwards.

During the last ten years manufacturers have attempted to accommodate women better in more than just outdoors clothing.

Left, Mountain Designs' Bibbulmun pack.

Below, an example of a smaller pack, the Macpac Tekapo.



Harness design and hip-belts

The role of a harness is to ensure the strategic distribution of the weight within your pack to the best location on your body. A good harness gives reasonable freedom of movement and distributes weight to the best load-bearing areas of your body including your hips, lower back and shoulders.

There are internal aluminium frames within the pack, along the length of your back. These frames are commonly pre-shaped; however, the aluminium frames can be flexed and shaped to match the curve of your spine better.

The use of laminated, high-density foam within shoulder-straps and hip-belts has made them fit better ergonomically. Women's harnesses use these materials to accommodate the female form.

One of the most noticeable differences between pack designs occurs at the most critical point of contact on the harness, the hip-belt. The hip-belt is linked to the internal frame in a way to allow for active movement and transfer the bulk of the carried weight to the lower back and hips. Put simply, the better the weight transfer to the hips (specifically the front of the hips) and consequently the lower body, the more weight you can carry comfortably.

At its simplest, the hip-belt is stitched to the pack. Padding gives it comfort and stabiliser straps load some of the weight to the hips. As the harness design develops and becomes more refined, hip-belts have stiffened plastic sheets laminated between high-density foam, can be moulded to fit an individual and incorporate secondary aluminium rods with the aim of better transferring weight.

Harnesses can be broadly described as using either a fixed or floating hip-belt design. Fixed hip-belts are sewn straight on to the pack, transferring weight directly to the hips. This style of harness has fewer adjustments and is simpler. With floating hip-belts the belt is attached to the pack by a pivot point of some kind, allowing the hip-belt to move independently of the pack, reducing rubbing on the hips. This style of harness is also said to allow better energy efficiency and prevent your pack affecting your balance.

While hip-belts have received a lot of attention recently, ensuring you find a pack that fits the rest of your body shape, your trip requirements and budget is just as important.

Women's harnesses are generally shorter and have a different hip-belt and shoulder-straps. Where a pack is available with a women's specific harness, the pack volume is generally reduced by five–ten litres.

Durability

Directly related to the workmanship and fabric, this subjective durability rating measures the finish of the product and the mix of materials including buckles and zips, two common failure points. Extra layers of fabric covering high-wear areas can also extend the life of your pack.

Water resistance

None of the packs surveyed are waterproof. However, this rating considers the mix of fabric weights and types and the resulting water resistance. As mentioned, canvas is generally more water-resistant than synthetic fabrics. Other features that can make a difference are the seams, water-resistant zips and pack covers.

Value

The range of packs available is bigger than that presented in this survey and can be

somewhat overwhelming. You need to make a final decision based on your needs and the considerations outlined here. The subjective value rating places equal value upon the durability, harness design and water resistance of each pack (25 per cent each), takes into account the price (20 per cent), and a judgment is made by the author with regards to design, intended use and place of manufacture (five per cent).

Other brands available

Brand	Distributor	Contact
Aarn	Wildside Design	(03) 5282 5654
Arc'teryx	Outdoor Agencies	(02) 9438 2266
Black Diamond	Sea to Summit	1800 787 677
Karrimor	Proactiv	www.activeplanet.com.au
Marmot	LA Imports	(02) 9913 7155
Salewa	Intertrek	(02) 9476 0672
The North Face	True Alliance	www.truealliance.com.au
White Mountain	White Mountain	www.whitemountain.com.au
Wild Country	Ray's Outdoors	www.raysoutdoors.com.au

The Mountain Ash 65 from Black Wolf is its own caption!



Price

All prices have been provided by manufacturers or suppliers. The maximum price for a given pack is listed but, depending on the size of the pack, some models may be cheaper. 🐾

Nick Byrne lives in northern Tasmania and has just become a father. After years of outdoors experiences on four continents he hopes to rediscover the outdoors and its seasons with his child.

This survey was refereed by Andrew Rentfree.

A REAL WILD CHILD

Sean Wood surveys child carriers for bushwalking

CAN YOU IMAGINE AN INFLATABLE ONE-PERSON boat as a portable cot? Two friends of mine travelled around Thailand with a six-month-old child and this piece of ingenuity! I cannot aspire to these feats of (insane) parenting but our child carrier has helped my wife and me continue to enjoy bushwalking, and help our children enjoy the outdoors.

Best suited for

Before choosing a child-carrier pack you need to determine your main requirements. Taking into account harness comfort and volume, packs in this survey have been categorised into those best suited for day walks of up to two hours, longer day walks of two–four hours and overnight walks.

Like any rucksack, a child carrier requires a comfortable harness. It is also imperative for the pack to have enough storage capacity to hold all the child's needs (clothes for different conditions, food and water, nappies, a toy or two!) To extend a day walk into an overnight trip requires a pack with a larger capacity, and a partner who can carry an 85 litre pack with everything else for all of you.

The materials of all the child carriers surveyed are nylon and/or polyester derivatives.

Volume

Volume is the capacity of the main storage compartment and was supplied by the manufacturer. Like most rucksacks there isn't an industry standard for measuring capacity (despite the laws of physics!) so when choosing a child carrier take the child's normal daily requirements of clothing, nappies and everything else to the shop and try to fit them into the pack. This enables you to assess the volume of different brands and how easy it is to get into the storage areas. If a model is available in two sizes the smaller capacity is listed.

Stopping to smell the flowers—the surveyor puts his child carrier through its paces with daughter Erin.
Ali Wood



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Weight

This was supplied by the manufacturer. The weight of your child is going to influence how far and for how long you will be able to walk. Bushwalking with a partner or a group is obviously recommended as an extra pack to distribute the load is a bonus.

If two sizes of a model are available, the lighter weight is listed.



The DMH Deluxe Takkapak with fluffy inhabitant.

Back lengths available

Most child-carrier packs have one standard, adjustable back length. However, two models in the survey are available in two different back lengths. As is the case with traditional rucksacks, this allows for a more specific, better fit. This is especially important when requiring a pack for long day walks or overnight with only one person carrying the child. In most situations parents swap the carrier between them and it is not feasible to have two different packs. The adjustable harness 'one size fits all' approach is generally more than adequate, but the pack should be bought with the most likely carrier in mind.

Accessories included

The accessories listed are items that are not essential to, or an integral part of, the pack. Generally these are removable and are supplied inclusive of the price of the child carrier.

Optional accessories

These accessories are not supplied as part of the pack and can be purchased as add-ons. Some accessories you will find invaluable, and others superfluous. Talk to people

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Child carriers for bushwalking

	Best suited for	Volume, litres	Weight, grams	Back lengths available	Accessories included	Optional accessories	Harness comfort (adult)	Harness comfort (child)	Value	Comments	Approx. price, \$
Deuter Vietnam www.deuter.com											
Kid Comfort 3	L	21	2950	1	H, F		●●●●	●●●●	●●●	TÜV CE certified; best featured pack in survey	400
DMH China www.dmh.aust.com †											
Deluxe Tekkapak	S	12	2000	1	H		●●	●	●●		160
Kathmandu China www.kathmandu.com.au											
Baby Carrier	S	10	2900	1	C		●●●½	●●	●●	Survey of old model—new model now in shops	300
Macpac Philippines www.macpac.co.nz											
Possum	O	35	2300	1	F, M	H, N, R	●●●½	●●●	●●●●		300
Varmose	O	35	2800	S-M, M-L	D, H, R	N	●●●●	●●●	●●●		450
Mountain Designs China www.mountaindesigns.com											
Joey	L	20	2900	1	C, H		●●	●●	●●		300
Salewa China www.salewa.com †											
Koala	L	20	2740	1	F, H, W		●●½	●●	●●½		220
Kid Carrier Light	L	20	2700	1	D, H, R		●●½	●●	●●●	New for 2006	250
Tatonka Vietnam www.tatonka.com											
Kid Carrier	S	10	2300	1	H, N	K	●●½	●●	●●½		160
Baby Carrier	S	15	2900	1	H, N	K	●●½	●●	●●	TÜV CE certified	280
VauDe China www.vau.de †											
SOFT II	S	na	550	1			●●	●	●●●	For children aged one–nine months	60
Butterfly Comfort	L	12	4050	1	C, H, N, R		●●●	●●½	●●●	Straps for child's foot support	300
Wilderness Equipment Vietnam www.wildequipment.com.au †											
Wild Child	O	25	2940	S-M, M-L	F	BP, H, R, SP	●●●	●●	●●½	Heaviest-duty pack surveyed (500 denier Cordura)	500

● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent Best suited for: Long day walk, Overnight walk, Short day walk Volume of main storage compartment Back lengths available: 1 adjustable length Accessories: BP additional removable back pocket, Change mat, D zip-off day pack, F removable face cushion, H sun/rain hood, Kid's poncho, Mirror, N removable neck pillow, Rain cover, SP additional removable side pockets, Water-bottle TÜV Rheinland is an independent testing and certification agency Macpac is recalling all child carriers from its 2006 range. Mountain Designs is recalling the Joey. Contact the place of purchase for more details na not applicable † not seen by surveyor ‡ not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made

Buy right

- Volume—what space do you need and how much walking will you actually do? As with rucksacks, sometimes too much space is just added weight.
- Try the carrier out before buying it. Ask for help from the outset so that all features can be described to you.
- Most children put up a fight when first placed in the harness. However, once the child is on your shoulders and seeing a new world it will settle down and enjoy itself.
- A word of advice: tie things down! Children will leave trails of hats, toys, water-bottles (and anything else available) behind them—possibly an instinctive back-tracking device!

Wilderness Equipment's Wild Child is a heavy-duty model.



with child carriers before buying every optional accessory.

Harness comfort (adult)

Rucksack manufacturers produce all the child carriers surveyed. As applies to any rucksack, the ability to adjust the harness to fit different people is important. The shoulder-straps should curve comfortably under the arms and adjust smoothly. The harness should fit different back lengths and have adequate ventilation. The adjustment of hip-belt, sternum straps and load-bearing straps all help to create a comfortable carrying harness. Often the primary use of the child carrier is as an easier, less cumbersome pram, so the harness needs to be comfortable and easy to fine-tune—you may as well get as much use out of your investment as possible! All of these factors were used to determine this subjective rating.

Harness comfort (child)

Do not forget the child when it comes to harness comfort. The

rating is based on how well the harness is designed to carry different shaped children and how easy it is to adjust. The best harnesses also have padded shoulder-straps and head support while the seat does not splay the child's legs too awkwardly. To make life simpler, look for buckles for adjusting the child's position that are easy to release and tighten.

Value

This subjective rating is derived by considering the features and accessories that are provided with the carrier, the benefits of the features, and how well they actually work. It is also based upon the combination of design and ease of adjustment, and the carrier's actual intended use. The value is then determined by evaluating these factors against the price.

Price

The retail price was established with retailers in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. 📍

Sean Wood is often found walking the hills around the ACT with his wife, two-and-a-half year old daughter and ten-month old son. He has spent 15 years working in outdoors retail and longer enjoying the Australian outdoors.

This survey was refereed by Andrew Renfree.



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Gone, with the wind

Scott Edwards finds out if wind-proof fleece and soft-shell jackets are essential garments for outdoors enthusiasts

Wild Gear Surveys: what they are and what they're not

(See box on page 61)

ON MY FIRST BUSHWALK I TOOK THICK, WOOLLEN jumpers to keep me warm through a lot of dismal weather in South-west Tasmania. Unfortunately, they were terribly heavy when the wetness worked its

way deep into the fibres. Comfort levels dropped even more dramatically during multiday trips when there wasn't much chance to dry anything. Huts on the route would be filled to capacity with others vainly trying to dry their garments. The smell of dripping jumpers, pants and socks was indescribable and accurately reflected the materials' ovine origins. Tent-based trips were far worse but these were the inevitable trials and tribulations that one

accepted as characteristic of hard-core bushwalking.

When polyester fleece hit the market at affordable prices, a boom industry was created. Fleece jackets are now as common along the café strips of any city as they are on bushwalkers. Ignoring the irony of urban fashions, polyester fleece is still an amazing fabric that continues to be a wardrobe staple for most outdoors users. It has a brilliant warmth-to-weight ratio, stays warm when wet and dries incredibly quickly, even while being worn. The ubiquitous shaved-pile fabric is the more common type and continues to be popular due to its durability and relatively low cost. Fluffier, high-lofting fleeces have better warmth-to-weight ratios but their usefulness reduces once the pile begins to flatten.

Despite the inherent usefulness of polyester fleece, its major downfall is dealing with wind and rain. Due to the open nature of the weave, wind tends to cut through the fabric, resulting in rapid heat loss. It is similar with water resistance: light drizzle is rarely a problem but once the rain sets in, the water will seep through. Although fleece has the ability to keep you warm when wet, add wind to the equation and hypothermia becomes increasingly likely. Whether it be wind or rain, the simplest solution is to throw on a waterproof, wind-proof and

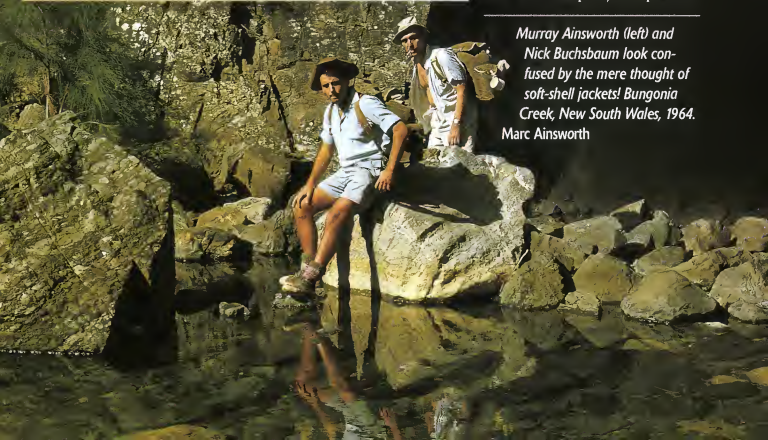
Buy right

- Wind-proof fleece/soft-shell jackets are often sized for a close fit. Try a range of sizes and check the fit by raising your arms. Is your midriff exposed? Are the sleeves long enough? Do the cuffs slide down to your elbows? Will it fit over your hips?
- Is the jacket too loose for wind resistance? Tight collar, cuffs and hems or tightening draw-cords can reduce wind entry but if it is loose in the body it can turn you into a balloon!
- Active or aerobic usage might actually require less warmth. Look for thin fleece or fleece-mesh linings.
- Increased wind- and water resistance are advantages but be mindful that standard fleeces are lighter, more comfortable under a shell and dry more quickly. Carefully

consider the garment's intended use and the conditions in which it has to perform.

- Stretch is often important for pursuits such as climbing and ski-touring. Look for stretch materials or panels
- Pack straps and harsh vegetation can damage the wind-proof barriers. Consider reinforcement panels on critical areas.
- Soft-shell outer fabrics require maintenance when the outside fabric loses its water repellency. Rejuvenate the DWR (durable water repellency) using a product like Nikwax TX-Direct or Grangers XT, available at most outdoors shops.
- These are expensive garments so follow care instructions judiciously and wash with non-detergent soaps such as Nikwax Techwash (available at most outdoors shops).

Murray Ainsworth (left) and Nick Buchsbaum look confused by the mere thought of soft-shell jackets! Bungonia Creek, New South Wales, 1964.
Marc Ainsworth



Wind-proof fleece and soft-shell jackets

	Fabric make	Fabric type	Fabric features	Comments	Agency price, \$
Berghaus China www.berghaus.com					
Element soft shell †	Berghaus soft shell	2P	Nylon stretch outer with DWR coating; brushed inner surface	Wind flap; two zip hand-warmer pockets; draw-cord hem	180
Hurricane Pro †	Gore WindStopper	3L	Polyester fleece outer; PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Two zip hand-warmer pockets and internal pocket; lycra-bound cuffs and draw-cord hem	280
Pro-shield	Gore WindStopper soft shell	3L	Polyester stretch woven outer with DWR; PTFE; fleece inner; Lam	Men's and women's cut; two zip hand-warmer pockets and zip external chest pocket; draw-cord collar	350
Black Wolf China www.blackwolf.com.au					
Twister	Gore WindStopper	3L	Polyester fleece outer; PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Wind flap; hidden zip pockets; draw-cords	300
Cloudveil China www.cloudveil.com					
Serendipity	Schoeller Dryskin Extreme	2P	Nylon stretch woven outer with DWR; polyester fleece inner	Alpine cut; two angled Napoleon pockets; draw-cord collar	300
Boundary †	Schoeller WB-400	3L	Nylon/lycra stretch woven outer; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	One of warmest soft shells in survey; four-way stretch; fleece liner	500
Columbia China/Vietnam www.columbia.com					
Caddy Daddy soft shell	Titanium Omni-Tech	3L	Polyester stretch outer with DWR; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Men's cut; articulated elbows	170
Soft Drop soft shell	As above	3L	Polyester outer with DWR; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Women's cut; articulated elbows	170
Ice Fall soft shell	Omni-Bloc Cyber Stretch HP Titanium	3L	Stretch nylon outer with DWR; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Men's and women's cut; four-way stretch; articulated elbows; draw-cord collar	250
Earth Sea Sky New Zealand www.earthseasky.co.nz †					
Piranha	Gore WindStopper	3L	Polyester fleece outer; PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Two-way front zip; pit-zips; articulated elbows; internal and external chest pockets; draw-cords	400
Fairlydown (Zone) China www.zonenz.co.nz †					
Shield	Punato No Wind	3L	Polyester fleece outer; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Men's and women's cut; zip hand-warmer pockets	200
Pinacle	Gore WindStopper soft shell	3L	Polyester stretch woven outer with DWR; PTFE; fleece inner; Lam	Ripstop reinforcing on high abrasion areas; dual-slider pit-zips; hand-warmer pockets	400
Feathertop China www.sitro.com.au					
Two layer soft shell	na	2L	Nylon outer with DWR; polyester fleece inner	Zip chest pocket and two zip hand-warmer pockets; draw-cord hem	150
Gondwana China www.gondwanaoutdoor.com.au					
Simoon	Polartec Windpro	2P	Polyester woven outer; polyester fleece inner	Women's cut available; zip hand-warmer pockets; draw-cord hem	300
Kathmandu China www.kathmandu.com.au					
Force 10	Windfleece	2L	Polyester fleece outer; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Men's and women's cut; zip hand-warmer pockets; inside pockets; draw-cord hem	330
Lowe Alpine China www.lovealpine.com					
Multipitch	Stormweave	2P	Nylon stretch woven outer; polyester inner	Two high zip pockets; draw-cord hem and collar	200

breathable shell. Although a waterproof jacket is a key survival tool, it's not necessarily very comfortable (or stylish) to walk in due to the bulk. It's also probably jammed in the rucksack and temporarily out of reach. If only there was some way to extend the comfort range of the insulating layer so one wouldn't have to stop...

The availability of garments in the survey will change quickly as this is a fashion-driven market and styles are constantly changing. However, this survey should provide you with the information needed to choose a jacket.

Fleece fabric type and features

During the last decade there have been a number of innovations that seek to extend the usefulness of fleece jackets. Some jackets have two fleece layers laminated together, the binding glue acting as a membrane. This barrier allows moisture vapour to es-

cape while giving a very high wind resistance and an increased water resistance. A slightly more technological approach is to laminate a vapour-permeable membrane film (usually made of Teflon [polytetrafluoroethylene-PTFE] or polyurethane) to the fleece layers. This is similar to the membranes found in waterproof, breathable shell jackets but is generally much thinner. This creates a wind-proof barrier, allows high breathability and, again, some degree of water resistance. For more aerobic or active uses where overheating can be a problem, a fleece mesh is sometimes substituted for the inner layer of fleece.

Soft shell—fabric type and features

For many people soft shell is a confusing term. A soft-shell jacket is generally made up of a water-resistant shell fabric with an insulative inner fabric, such as fleece. The outer fabric repels light rain while the inner provides warmth and moisture dis-



Earth Sea Sky's Piranha WindStopper jacket.

Wind-proof fleece and soft-shell jackets continued

	Fabric: make	Fabric: type	Fabric: features	Comments	Approx. price, \$
Macpac China www.macpac.co.nz					
6th Sense Mountain Light	6th Sense Stretch Light	3L	Nylon stretch woven outer with DWR; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Men's and women's cut; adjustable, fold-away hood; double storm-flaps; chest pocket; zip side pockets; draw-cord hem	300
6th Sense Mountain Versatile	Polartec Power Shield	2P	Nylon stretch woven outer with DWR; fleece inner	Men's and women's cut; double storm-flaps; chest pocket; zip side pockets; draw-cord hem	300
Nemesis †	Polartec Power Shield and Windpro	2P	As above	Men's and women's cut	370
Marmot China www.marmot.com					
ATV †	Schoeller Dryskin	2P	Nylon stretch woven outer with DWR; polyester fleece inner	Angel-wing cut for free arm movement	400
Sharp Point	Gore WindStopper soft shell	3L	Polyester outer with DWR; PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Reinforced shoulders and elbows; pit-zips; draw-cord hem	550
Monte China/Fiji www.monte.com.fj					
Space Junky	Schoeller WB-400 Extreme	3L	Nylon/lycra stretch woven outer with DWR; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Hand-warmer pockets; chest pocket; draw-cord hem and collar	370
Meteor †	As above	3L	As above	Winter weight; stretch Cordura; pit-zips	400
Mountain Designs China www.mountaindesigns.com					
Quest	Repel Wind soft shell	3L	Nylon stretch woven outer with DWR; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Articulated sleeves; pit-zips; hand-warmer pockets; Napoleon pocket	280
Vector	Gore WindStopper and WindStopper soft shell	3L	Nylon and polyester fleece outer with DWR; PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	WindStopper soft shell reinforced shoulders and elbows, WindStopper fleece in torso area; pit-zips; articulated sleeves; zip hand-warmer pockets; zip Napoleon pocket	300
Eiger	Gore WindStopper soft shell	3L	Nylon stretch outer with DWR; PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Articulated sleeves; pit-zips; water-resistant front zip; hand-warmer pockets; Napoleon pocket	450
Pallin China www.paddypallin.com.au					
Synergy	Gore WindStopper soft shell	3L	Nylon outer with DWR, PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Men's and women's cut; stretch panels behind shoulders, under arms and in articulated sleeves; tricot vents; zip chest pocket; hand-warmer pockets; draw-cord hem	350
Snowgum China www.snowgum.com.au					
Alberta Loft Liner †	Gore WindStopper, Drop Liner	3L	Polyester/nylon outer with DWR; PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Draft flap; adjustable cuffs; draw-cord hem	250
Ontario	Gore WindStopper and WindStopper soft shell	3L	Nylon and polyester fleece outer with DWR; PTFE; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Women's model called Merida, WindStopper soft shell reinforcing on shoulders and arms, WindStopper fleece in torso area; pit-zips; hand-warmer pocket; chest pocket; draw-cord collar and hem	250
Wild Country China www.aysoutdoors.com.au					
Reversible Supplex	Supplex nylon	2L	Nylon outer with DWR; fleece inner	Fully reversible; internal zip pockets; large zip chest pockets	100
Wilderness Wear Australia www.wildernesswear.com.au					
Windbloc Full-zip Longline	Polartec Windbloc	3L	Polyester fleece outer; PU; polyester fleece inner; Lam	Longer cut with elasticised waist; draw-cord hem	300

Fabric type: 3L three layer, 2L two layer, 2P two ply membrane
na not available † not seen by surveyor ‡ not seen by referee

Fabric features: DWR durable water repellency, Laminated layer construction, PTFE polytetrafluoroethylene or Teflon membrane, PU polyurethane
The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made

The only jacket surveyed with a hood, Macpac's 6th Sense Mountain Light soft shell.

Name game

DWR (durable water repellency)
Coating applied to outer fabrics to promote beading of water and reduce wetting out of the fabric.

Gore WindStopper
Wind-proof, water resistant and highly breathable membrane.

Cyber Stretch HP
Tightly woven, stretch outer fabric.

Omni-Tech
Wind-proof, water resistant and highly breathable membrane.

Polartec Power Shield
Tightly woven, stretch outer fabric.

Polartec Windbloc
Wind-proof, water resistant and highly breathable membrane.

PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene)
Membrane made using gas-expanded PTFE, commonly known as Teflon.

PU (polyurethane)
Membrane made using gas-expanded polyurethane.

Repel Wind
Wind-proof, water resistant and highly breathable membrane.

Schoeller Dryskin
Tightly woven, stretch outer fabric.

WB-400
Wind-proof, water-resistant and highly breathable membrane.

Windfleece
Wind-proof, water resistant and highly breathable membrane.

Berghaus soft shell, Gore WindStopper soft shell, Omni-Bloc, Repel Wind soft shell, Schoeller Dryskin, Schoeller WB-400, Titanium Omni-Tech, 6th Sense Stretch Light and Stormweave are all brand names for soft-shell fabrics. Gore WindStopper, Pontetortito No Wind, Windfleece, and Polartec Power Shield, Windbloc and Windpro are brand names for wind-proof fleece fabrics.

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person. (Confusingly, some manufacturers even attach the 'soft shell' label to waterproof shell jackets because the fabric feels soft to touch!) The main difference between soft-shell jackets and wind-proof jackets is the outer fabric. The outer fabric of soft shells is a tightly woven, water-resistant material, as opposed to the fluffy, insulative outer of a wind-proof fleece.

The most low-tech soft-shell solution is to combine a Ripstop nylon or polyester outer with a sewn-in fleece inner. This makes the garment reasonably water resistant while providing good wind resistance. However, fit is often compromised when two separate fabrics are simply sewn together. More high-tech garments are made of laminated layers and microporous membranes, as found in the wind-proof fleece jackets. Another method uses a very tightly woven, stretch outer fabric with a fleece inner. The two fabrics are joined together through the weaving process to form a two-ply construction. Whatever the construction, the concept is essentially the same—they provide water resistance, wind resistance and some warmth.

Design

A lot of wind-proof fleece or soft-shell jackets are cut for a close fit to reduce the amount of wind that can enter the jacket by the cuffs or hem. Outdoors users of heavier builds or those looking for more relaxed fits may have to consider going up a size. Stretch fabrics can provide a little more comfort and a lot more freedom of movement. The

thickness of fleece layers on both the inside and the outside greatly determines the overall warmth. Garments with fleece inside and out are the best insulators on their own, as well as under a waterproof shell. Wind-proof fleece and soft-shell jackets designed for active wear tend to have very thin polyester fleece inners to reduce overheating. These brushed layers help to disperse moisture and reduce clamminess while still providing some warmth.



The Wilderness Wear Windbloc Full-zip Longline—a longer style of jacket.

Other brands available

Brand	Distributor	Contact
Arc'teryx	Outdoor Agencies	(02) 9438 2266
GoLite	Multi-Sport Imports	(07) 3892 1155
Helly Hansen	Blue Rock	(03) 9338 5326
Huski	Palazzi Trading Pty Ltd	www.palazzi.com.au
Karrimor	Proactiv	www.activeplanet.com.au
Mountain Hardwear	Outdoor Performance	(07) 3114 4311
Patagonia		www.patagonia.com
Peak Performance		www.peakperformance.com
Salewa	Intertrek	(02) 9476 0672
Salomon	Amer Sports	1800 651 872
Tatonka	Outdoor Survival	(03) 9775 1916
The North Face	True Alliance	www.truealliance.com.au
Vaude	Rucscac Supplies	(02) 9546 8455

Conclusion

Wind-proof or soft-shell jackets are very versatile garments and can play a valuable role. They perform superbly when ski-touring in India, powder skiing in the British Columbian back country or walking on the Bogong High Plains in spring. Versions designed for more active wear can also make multipitch rock-climbing a breeze (pardon the pun), especially with articulated arms and stretch fabrics. However, wind-proof and soft-shell jackets are not the best garments for very wet conditions such as those often encountered in South-west Tasmania and New Zealand's South Island. Even if a waterproof shell jacket is placed over the garment there is still potential for hypothermia due to the garment drying more slowly and its reduced insulation. Standard, non-barrier fleeces perform much better when coupled with a waterproof, breathable shell and are lighter. Accepting these limitations, and using the jackets in the right conditions, may put wind-proof fleece or soft-shell jackets among the most used items in your wardrobe. ☺

Scott Edwards likes to walk or ski around the Australian Alps using the lightest gear available. He then contradicts this philosophy by trying to pack in as much gourmet food and drink as possible. He believes in consuming the lot before the walk out.

This survey was referred by Greg Cairé.



SuperLight Tents and Bivys

The SuperLight series has been designed to offer dependable protection in most conditions while weighing 2.5 kg or less. Proven designs are combined with EPIC by Nextec and SilNylon technologies to create a line of tents offering the ultimate in lightweight, packable and breathable tents.

When weight and space are crucial, Black Diamond's SuperLight tents offer a better balance of what a user needs in a somewhat drier, non-torrential down pour and moderate snow conditions. That said, today's cutting edge alpinists have applauded the SuperLight's performance on big alpine climbs such as K7 and Mt Huntington.



Skylight - 1.88 kg, 3 person (NEW)

Roomy and with a view, the new Skylight offers the best of both worlds. The front third of the EPIC canopy can be rolled back for stargazing on a nice night while still being enclosed by protective netting. Should the weather take a turn, roll the canopy out and enjoy full coverage from the elements with the built-in vestibule.

EPIC fabric is weatherproof and breathable

Under 2.5 kg of roomy, single-wall protection

Ultrafine, ultralight, tight-seams, protective mesh



Firstlight 1.22 kg, 2 person



Guiding Light (NEW) 2.44 kg, 4 person



Lighthouse 1.45 kg, 2 person



Lightsabre Bivy 639 g, 1 person



Winter Bivy 277 g, 1 person



EPIC Fabric by Nextec

EPIC by Nextec® is constructed by silicon-encapsulating individual fibres, making it breathable and extremely lightweight. EPIC offers better protection than DWR-treated fabrics that wash out over time and is more breathable than PU coatings or PTFE laminates including Gore-Tex, Conduit SL and Pertex®. EPIC is excellent for use in tents when heavy condensation is an issue and during rain and snow showers.

SilNylon Fabric

SilNylon is a silicone-coated ripstop nylon that is twice as strong as high-quality polyurethane-coated ripstop nylon. At two-thirds the weight of PU-coated ripstop, SilNylon has an excellent strength-to-weight ratio. SilNylon is waterproof, resilient in its durability and is very resistant to degradation over time.

DAC Poles

DAC Featherlite tent poles are used in our SuperLight Series and work to inherently improve a tent's strength-to-weight ratio while providing the least chance of breakage because there are no glued inserts. Their sleeved and structurally sound connecting pole sections eliminate their weakest link, glued pole inserts, reducing weight by 15% over other commonly-used aluminum poles.

Model	Capacity (persons)	Weight w/poles	Packaged Weight w/poles	Area SQ Metre	Dimensions L*W*H	No of Poles	Doors	Vestibule Style	Canopy	Floor
Guiding Light	4	2.44 kg	—	4.35	218x209x107 cm	5 DAC Featherlite	2	Clip On	EPIC	SilNylon
Skylight	3	1.88 kg	—	3.4	226x176x130 cm	3 DAC Featherlite	1	—	EPIC	SilNylon
Lighthouse	2	1.45 kg	1.71 kg	2.85	221x130x109 cm	3 DAC Featherlite	1	Clip On	EPIC	SilNylon
Firstlight	2	1.22 kg	1.49 kg	2.54	208x123x107 cm	2 DAC Featherlite	1	Clip On	EPIC	SilNylon
Lightsabre Bivy	1	639 g	639 g	1.9	226x84x64 cm	2 DAC Featherlite	1	—	EPIC	SilNylon
Winter Bivy	1	277 g	280 g	1.3	208 x 84 cm	0	1	—	EPIC	EPIC

RUCKSACKS

get the attention of designers and the affection of engineers

It seems there's no stopping these seam welders. **Vaude's Aracanda 30 pack** recently won the 'if' award (a prestigious international design award) for its use of high-tech, seamless processing which has resulted in a completely seamless pack! Using the latest thermal seam-closure methods such as ultrasonic- and high-frequency welding, materials are fused together by vibrations at temperatures above 250°C. The resulting 'seamless material transitions' (seams, in 'old speak') are said to be absolutely water-proof, very durable and produce rucksacks that weigh less than traditionally manufactured packs. Contact **Rucsac Supplies** for more information on (02) 9546 8455. RRP \$199.

Billed as the alpine pack for all seasons, the **SubXero 25** from **Macpac** is suitable for day walks or climbs, snow sports, and everything in between. Its thermo-formed 'Wraptr' back panel is said to dry fast and the harness carries the load snugly. Generous side pockets store all your toys; the tool port, gear loops on the base and hips and the hydration sleeve lend multitasking appeal and the 'tough-as' fabrics will weather all manner of bumps and scrapes—and it only weighs 1.2 kilograms. RRP \$199. For more details, visit www.macpac.co.nz

Mountain Designs has approached the 'science' of matching rucksacks with diverse body shapes in a novel way with its **Custom Fit harness** and **Body Motion** suspension system. Using interchangeable harness components, (three sizes of shoulder-straps and waist-belts) and quick-adjusting back lengths, Mountain Designs claims to be able to custom-fit packs to those with inordinately long backs, narrow hips, and even neckless, nature-loving, front-row forwards (big rugby players, for the southerners). In addition, the **Body Motion** system claims to mirror body physiology with pivot points at crucial areas on the harness that allows it to be more naturally (and efficiently) carried. RRP from \$329 for the Terra. See which rucksacks feature the new harnesses at www.mountaindesigns.com



TENTS exposed to the dark light of night

Black Diamond's new **SkyLight tent** is sure to be a hit with star-gazers and claustrophobics, but it risks alienating the agoraphobics among us. Featuring a spacious vestibule and roomy three-person interior, the single-skin Epic fabric can be rolled back over the roof about halfway, revealing nothing but fine mesh between you and the biting bugs and shooting stars. It weighs only 1.86 kilograms (light, considering the observatory and sun room). The **Light range** also boasts the **Guiding Light**,

a five-pole, four person, two-door tent (no observatory) that weighs just under two-and-a-half kilograms. For more details, contact **Sea to Summit** on 1800 787 677. RRP \$859 and \$1199, respectively.

Left, not a seam in sight with Vaude's Aracanda pack. Right, the aptly named Black Diamond SkyLight.



Mont's synthetic (r)Evolution

Mont's new range of technical, **synthetic sleeping-bags** is getting nods of approval even from ardent, pro-down old-schoolers. The fill for the **Evolution range** is continuous, polyester-filament Polarguard 3-D, and Radiant Barrier technology (an ultralight, aluminium barrier that is said to reflect body heat back into the bag) is used, along with the labour-intensive shingle baffle construction, which prevents cold spots from forming along stitch lines, producing bags claimed to have a high warmth-to-weight ratio and superior compressibility. Like their down cousins, they've been subjected to Mont's exhaustive attention to detail and are packed with features. Bags are available in alpine box foot, tapered rectangular and rectangular shapes, depending on your needs. For more information, call 1800 800 497. RRP from \$249 for the Evo Alpine Extreme to \$129 for the Evo Ultralight.

Hourglass figure back in fashion

Insulatmat has developed two self-inflating sleeping-mats with quirky features. The **Uber Lite**, a three-quarter-length mat, is hourglass-shaped for reduced bulk and weight (only 300 grams), but features extra padding beneath the hip and shoulder areas. The **Max Thermolite** is said to be the lightest full-length pad available (just 538 grams) by virtue of the 'diamond pattern matrix-cut' used on the foam. The mat has a plump, insulated 'air loft thermo rail' down each side because it is, after all, a long way to the tent floor. Both mats have hard-anodized valves (apparently lighter and stronger than plastic) and dirt- and water-repellant finishes. Insulatmat products are distributed by **Sea to Summit**. RRP is \$79 for the Uber Lite and \$119 for the Max Thermolite.

BE SEEN

Sure to catch the eye of the safety conscious is the highly visible, retro-reflective **visual signalling device, Aerotape**. The sturdy tape reacts to natural light in the same way as a road sign, easily identifying your location. Because it passively reflects light, your party can remain sheltered and let the tape do all the work. The tape is double-sided, 60 millimetres wide, eight and a half metres long and the compact 'cassette' unit weighs 158 grams. It is said to reflect light for more than 100 metres in full white-out conditions. After you use it and you are found by the search and rescue service (presumably you've survived!), send the unit back to the distributor and the company pledge to replace the unit (the tape doesn't retract) free of charge. Visit www.aerotape.biz for more information. RRP \$39.95.

Kovea keep coming up with lightweight luxury. The **Observer** butane lantern fits

Immerse Yourself

Aerotape is an amazing new visual signalling device that increases your chances of detection & survival by making you easier for rescuers to find.

Aerotape is a 8.5 metre by 60 mm retro reflective (think freeway sign technology) ribbon that fits in a compact 19x115x76 mm protective case. Once deployed, the Aerotape constantly signals your rescuers even if you are disabled, unconscious, or seeking shelter in a less exposed area. Aerotape is very effective in helping searchers on the ground to spot you and even more effective in an airborne search.

Aerotape's simplicity means it can be used intuitively. It can be a first response within a group because everyone can afford an Aerotape, or used post EPIRB to speed up visual detection and save precious time.

It's always ready technology. No batteries, no computers, no corrosion & no complications. Whether it's sunshine or a white-out retro reflective surfacing technology just keeps bouncing light. And at night, the surface coating flares when struck by light - that's more than a bonus, it's a potential life saver. All for under \$40.

Aerotape is a valuable addition to any survival kit



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standard S7-threaded gas canisters, is fired by Piezo ignition and is said to burn only 36-and-a-half grams an hour while throwing a 65-watt light, a 227 gram canister providing more than six hours of light at maximum output. Claimed to be one of the smallest and most efficient lightweight lamps available (105 millimetres high with a 50 millimetre diameter when packed), its output is adjustable. It comes with a hanger and two spare mantles—be sure to pack *War and Peace!* RRP \$54.95.

For those who prefer the enchanting hues of LED light, the **Elemental Cone-Tech** employs 17 hard-working LEDs powered by four C alkaline batteries, which are said to provide up to 300 hours of light. It stands at 250 millimetres high with an 85 millimetre diameter and weighs 360 grams (without batteries). You can switch between seven and 17 LEDs to suit the situation, the lantern's parabolic reflector maximising output. Both the battery and the LED chamber are O-ring sealed for water resistance. Contact **Grant Minervini Agencies** on (08) 8275 1555. RRP \$49.95.

The Elemental Cone-Tech doesn't quite have the ambience of candlelight, but it's oh so convenient!



Knick-Knacks

Reg Grundies get the treatment

When it comes to technical garments, why stop at the outer layers? Italian-made Tech-Base underwear from Berghaus is seam-free (no unsightly pressure marks), promotes breathability and have stretch panels where you need them and supportive fabrics where you need them more. Because of antibacterial treatment, the underwear is perfect for those who are disinclined to change clothes on long trips. Do you know someone like that? Contact Outdoor Agencies for more details on (02) 9438 2266. RRP \$39.95 for the boxers and \$34.95 for the briefs.

New-look Scarpa shoes

Footwear maestros Scarpa have redesigned most of their approach and technical walking shoes for 2006. The lightweight and very supportive Scarpa Ego is based on the Zero Gravity boot range (but slimmed down considerably) and is said to be extremely breathable and well suited to three-season or dry-climate use. The Enigma XCR's Gore-Tex XCR membrane lends four-season functionality to this lightweight but very sturdy shoe. It is said to perform like a bushwalking boot with the comfort of a low-cut shoe. A pair of size 42 shoes in either model weighs only 1040 grams. RRP \$239 and \$279, respectively. Contact Outdoor Agencies for more information.

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New and innovative products of relevance to the rucksack sports (on loan to Wild) and/or information about them, including high-resolution digital photos (on CD, not by email) or colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send them to Wild, PO Box 415, Pahrana, Vic 3181 or contact us by email: editorialadmin@wild.com.au



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Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send them to the address at the end of this department.



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Rock Island Bend, Franklin River, TAS The image that awakened and inspired a generation of conservationists.
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SAVING Recherche Bay

Greens Senator Bob Brown relates the full story behind the recent environmental win in Tasmania



In 1792, the French admiral Bruni D'Entrecasteaux brought two ships and more than 400 scientists and crew to Recherche Bay in far south Tasmania. In 1793, D'Entrecasteaux returned and was entertained by the Tasmanian Aborigines in a series of well-documented meetings which have a claim to be the most joyous in the history of first contact between indigenous people and the rapidly expanding European empires. But the natural splendour of Recherche Bay caught D'Entrecasteaux's eye first: 'We were filled with admiration at the sight of these ancient forests, in which the sound



of an axe had never been heard.' In January 2006, bulldozers were set to gouge an access road across Tasmania's Southport Lagoon Conservation Area to cut a swathe through that same ancient forest. If this had gone ahead, the logging planned for the north-east peninsula of Recherche Bay would be nearly complete by now and, by way of Gunns' mills, the Recherche Bay wood-chips on ships headed for Japan. Yet, almost miraculously, the Recherche Bay forest has been rescued.

Numerous players produced this miracle, and in the middle is Dick Smith. In the desperate days leading up to the New Year, Dick called to lend me two million

dollars to buy the forest from its owners. The Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC), a local version of the Australian Bush Heritage Fund, offered to own and manage the forest if it were purchased. Mother Nature also intervened: the roadworks, which should have begun in November, were delayed by one of the wettest springs on record.

Opposition to logging the historic forest was backed by the local Recherche Bay Protection Group, (and their very entertaining singers, the Recherche Baybes), historians, environmentalists and a growing number of people in Australia and France. At the forefront was the Australian National University's eminent professor of archaeology, John Mulvaney, who had successfully nominated Recherche Bay to Australia's National Heritage List and who advocates its nomination for World Heritage listing.

Also influencing this last-minute reprieve was the potential for very determined protests in the bulldozer-churned mud of the marshes through which the approach road was to cross. The police had begun surveying the area to establish a base camp from which to arrest protesters.

In 2003 I first met the owners of the Recherche Bay forest, brothers Rob and David Vernon, to test their interest in a sale. Their asking price of some two million dollars was, at the time, way out of reach. In October 2005, after the long-awaited National Heritage listing for Recherche Bay but with the Federal Government giving permission for the logging, I called Rob Vernon in a desperate effort to re-enter negotiations. That began a perilous process which collapsed more than once during the next four months of secret talks.

Top left, Bob Brown (left) and Dick Smith at the Recherche Bay celebrations in February. Top right, Brown addresses the crowds, Recherche Bay and its north-east peninsula behind. Below, the north-east peninsula of Recherche Bay with Mt La Perouse in the background. Brown



I launched our campaign for the public purchase of the historic peninsula at a Wilderness Society rally of several thousand people in Hobart in early November 2005. In December Tasmania's Lennon Government wrote me a disdainful letter saying it would not contribute 'one dollar' to a public rescue fund. To rub this in, it also wrote to the Federal Government telegraphing its hostile attitude.

The real breakthrough came in mid-January, when Dick Smith (whom I had persuaded out of anonymity) phoned Rob Vernon directly to assure him that the two million dollars was available. Rob agreed to sell and lawyers for the TLC and the Vernons began drawing up the contract. These negotiations were necessarily secret.

However, after talking to me, Dick Smith called the Tasmanian Premier Paul Lennon to ask that he reimburse the TLC the \$80 000 stamp-duty. That triggered a stunning transformation. Premier Lennon did an instant backward somersault on logging Recherche Bay. The Greens-brokered deal had cut across his plans to call an election. So he called the loggers to confirm that the sale was proceeding and his public relations team hijacked the process.

Within a few days the Premier put up the \$310 000 needed to remediate Gunns' road-works in the Southport Lagoon Conservation Area. (These had begun in 2003 and been stopped by a court action.) He also repaid the TLC's \$85 000 stamp-duty and granted it a further \$85 000. The Vernons were given \$210 000, bringing their total to \$2.21 million. (If the cost of the remediation of the road is included, the total is \$2.52 million.)

Premier Lennon invited Dick Smith to launch the deal at Recherche Bay. When told that I would not be invited, Dick declined. The Premier was undeterred. In Hobart's St David's Park on 8 February, he announced that he had saved Recherche Bay. He had the Vernons beside him. This won him State and national headlines. He then called the State election for 18 March.

Despite a 2.6 per cent swing against him, Lennon regained government. Under his authority, fire-bombing of clear-felled ancient forests resumed across Tasmania within a week. In late March the loggers invaded the World Heritage-value Upper Florentine Valley and more of the Styx River's 'Valley of the Giants'. This year another 20 000 hectares of Tasmania's natural forests will fall to the chain-saws. However, through a miracle of philanthropy, public spirit and luck of electoral timing, the historic 140 hectares on the north-east peninsula will not be amongst them. Instead, Recherche Bay is destined to become an international show-place of natural beauty with a joyous human history from which our troubled world will draw endless inspiration.

▲ Act now

Visit TLC's Web site at www.tasland.org.au to contribute to the purchase of Recherche Bay.

Wood-chip mills, 'salvage'

Logging in Victoria and New South Wales



Anne Marett reports that more than 834 000 tonnes of publicly owned native-forest wood is chipped each year by Australia's oldest wood-chip mill at Eden, on the south coast of NSW—that's more than 130 truck loads a day. The wood-chips are exported for paper manufacture, mainly to Japan. As well as killing millions of animals, threatening the survival of species and degrading the water-supply, wood-chipping in the area also degrades the natural environment, threatening tourism, the local economy's mainstay, while the highly mechanised wood-chip industry effectively exports jobs.

Wood chipping is what drives this native-forest destruction. Based on government statistics from 2005, the chip mill takes 90 per cent of wood taken from the Eden area, 80 per cent of that from East Gippsland in Victoria and 55 per cent from the area from Ulladulla to Narooma.

Given that there is now enough mature plantation hardwood in Australia to meet our needs and wood-chip export commitments, why are our precious native forests still being chipped? The answer is that wood from public native forests is sold to the chip mill for about one-third the price of wood from commercial plantations. The contract loggers are also heavily subsidised by grants from the Commonwealth for mechanical equipment, training, and even their trucks, while the wood-chip mill company makes huge profits, averaging an annual 23 per cent return to shareholders.

On 2 July a mass rally will be held at the chip mill at Eden to demand an end to native-forest wood-chipping in south-eastern NSW and East Gippsland. For further information, go to www.woodchippingsux.net.au or email: chipmillrally@yahoo.com.au

The fires of early 2003 were devastating. In Victoria they burned for almost two months

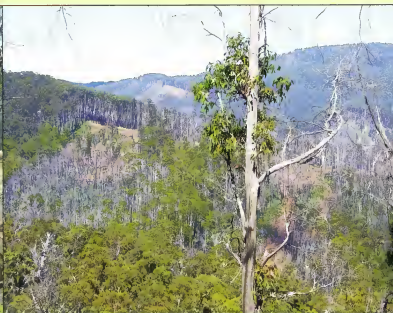
and encompassed around 1.2 million hectares of forests including a large part of the alpine area in the north-east of the State (see *In Wild* no 89). Luke Chamberlain reports that instead of the forests being given time to recover and regenerate, the government has put other plans into action. The north-east of Victoria has been turned into a wood-chipping playground, with clear-fell logging operations opportunistically dubbed 'salvage' logging. The scale of this logging is unprecedented in the region.

The original plans for the logging equate to an astonishing 50 years of logging in four years, with 14 000 hectares of alpine ash forests now on the chopping block for logging. Each day more than 50 logging trucks are roaring down the Ormeo Highway destined for the wood-chip mills. The salvage logging was supposed to end two years after the fires—it's now been three years and the operations are scheduled to continue for another two years.

To add insult to injury, some of the salvage coupes are within five kilometres of Mt Bogong, Victoria's highest peak and an iconic bushwalkers' mountain. The views from Camp Creek Gap lookout will be compromised by clear-fell scars on the northern slopes. The plans for logging also include coupes along the Australian Alps Walking Track, another Mecca for bushwalkers.

The autumn *Patoroo Review* reports that logging in the Tambo forests, north of Baimsdale, is serviced by more than 100 truck trips every day on only one road. Jill Redwood of Environment East Gippsland says: 'Entire forests of healthy trees are being mapped as fire salvage areas and sent off to the wood-chip mills.' Unburnt, live trees have been classified as 'fire killed' by Department of Sustainability & Environment foresters, coupe boundaries have been 'neatened' by the re-

logging and the 'whoops' factor



Top left, Eden's wood-chip mill with a stockpile of chips to be shipped to Japan. Michael Gormly. **Above,** a log dump in Bodalla State Forest near Narooma, NSW. Anne Marett. **Top right,** 'salvage' logging operations scar the eastern slopes of Mt Bogong, Victoria's highest peak. Luke Chamberlain. **Below,** protesters in the Royston Valley on an ancient 'stag', prime habitat for the Leadbeaters possum. Sarah Rees



removal of live trees, and lightly burned trees have been cut down with the expectation that they would die anyway.

In other Victorian logging news, the battle to stop the clear-felling of alpine forests of high conservation value in the Royston Valley, two hours east of Melbourne, lasted for more than a week. Sarah Rees reports that conservationists perched themselves in tree platforms high in the forest and camped on the logging access road, preventing log trucks from entering the coupe, with around 40 locals and supporters involved. The logging was to take place in the valley between the

Mt Bullfight Conservation Reserve and the Yarra Ranges National Park despite a desperate appeal by conservation groups to the Victorian Minister for the Environment, John Thwaites, for a moratorium until further studies could be undertaken on the value of the region.

The Central Highlands Alliance (TCHA) has been in discussion with the government for three years over the proposed logging of the 101 hectare coupe on the pristine Mt Bullfight. The area's alpine rainforest was found to be of State significance, with the proposed logging also destroying views from

Lake Mountain and significantly damaging Leadbeaters possum habitat.

Environmental groups were eventually rewarded when 60 hectares of high conservation value forest were excluded from logging. However, further negotiations for the last 41 hectares failed when a road was put through the rainforest. The region now suffers from fragmentation and is at risk from regeneration logging bums.

An Environment Protection Authority (EPA) audit conducted in February and reported in the *Age* on 9 February found at least four breaches to the *Environment Protection Act* by Victorian agencies in 2004–2005, three in East Gippsland and one in the Barnham State Forest (see *Wild* no 99). A wider EPA report into logging which accompanied the audit found an average of 91 per cent compliance with the law. However, according to the *Potoroo Review*, other breaches of the *Code of Forestry Conduct* were marked as compliant if they didn't cause an environmental hazard, with breaches found in 44 out of the 45 coupes sampled. The EPA was not asked to consider penalties for the logging breaches.

▲ Act now

If you are concerned about the scale of logging in the north-east of Victoria, please email the Bracks Government demanding that the 'salvage' logging operations cease. Premier Steve Bracks and Environment Minister John Thwaites can be reached at premier@dpc.vic.gov.au and john.thwaites@parliament.vic.gov.au, respectively.

And in Tasmania...

Geoff Law reports that in late March, Forestry Tasmania began cutting a new logging road into the old-growth forests of the Upper Flor-

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*The old-growth forest of the Upper Florentine valley before work on the logging road began. **Below**, destruction caused by the road building is now within five metres of this location. Both photos Geoff Law*

entire, immediately adjacent to the walking track to Lake Rhona in the Southwest National Park (see cover of *Wild* no 99). Forestry Tasmania claims that the area will be 'selectively logged' for 'speciality timber'—in contrast, the official logging plan shows that the forest will be clear-felled, with only small, isolated clumps of forest left, and 85 per cent of the wood will be exported as wood-chips.

In the last decades numerous experts have identified the area's World Heritage values. In October 2004, during the federal election campaign, the forest's future looked secure when Prime Minister John Howard promised to protect 18 700 hectares of old-growth forest next to the World Heritage Area in the Styx and Florentine valleys, and offered \$52 million to help the logging industry to deal with the loss of resources. However, in May 2005 the Tasmanian and Australian Governments reached a deal to protect only 4730

hectares of this old-growth, falling short of that promised by almost 75 per cent. The government then allocated \$235 million to the logging industry, more than four times the amount agreed in the previous year.

In related news, Eli Greig reports that international environmental group the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) has begun an international campaign to shine a bright light on the destruction of Tasmania's forests. RAN will target Australian embassies for high-profile protests. The Tasmanian timber industry is worried that protests will hurt the international image of the island State, resulting in a tourism downturn and harm to the economy.

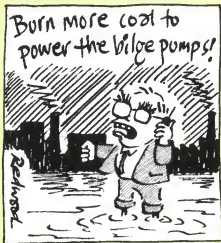
Terry Edwards from the Tasmanian Forest Industry Association said: 'It will hurt the forestry market, I don't think there's any doubt about that. But having said that, the real market it will hurt is Tasmania's tourism image overseas.'



Feeling the **heat** on climate change

Business and science turn it up

A report released by the Australian Business Roundtable on Climate Change (ABRCC) on 5 April called for business and government to respond more rapidly to the threat posed by climate change. According to the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), research on the effect of reducing emissions by 60 per cent by 2050 was commissioned for the report, with CSIRO determining the climate impacts on Australia and the Allen Consulting Group, the economic effects. Key findings supported the call to act early on



climate change, finding that this would allow stronger economic growth, create more jobs, and reduce the rate and magnitude of climate change and the flow-on effects for the economy than if action were delayed.

The ABRCC—with six top business executives including CEOs from BP Australia and Westpac, along with the ACF—called for the establishment of a 'national, market-based, carbon pricing mechanism', something which the biggest greenhouse-gas producing industries strongly resist. Other recommendations are the encouragement of innovation and investment in emerging technologies, and the building of the country's resilience to climate change.

The ABRCC report signals a new direction for Australian business, until now reluctant to take sides. However, it sidesteps the issue of the Kyoto Protocol.

The release of the report follows claims that the fossil fuel industry has access to confidential Federal Government processes and that scientists have been gagged to prevent them from criticising the government's climate change policy. Claims that prominent figures in industry were able to write cabinet submissions and ministerial briefings were aired on the ABC's *Four Corners* and reported in the *Age* on 14 February. Several senior CSIRO scientists also said that they have been censored, with politically sensitive recommendations cut before public release, sparking calls for an independent inquiry.

Wood-chips

Kiss kiss, bang bang

Andrew Cox reports that in April the NSW lemma Government removed a 1000 hectare chunk of Bargo State Conservation Area, near Nattai National Park in the southern highlands, to create a shooting facility. This is the largest National Park system revocation in the State for more than 20 years and sets a worrying precedent of providing sporting facilities in protected bushland. In an attempt to allay criticism, two other bushland areas earlier earmarked for shooting ranges near Campbelltown and north of Windsor were added to the parks system.

In what is seen by many as an attempt to shore up support from the Shooters Party in the NSW Upper House, the lemma Government has thrown its support behind a new body of recreational hunters called the Game Council. This is a statutory body governed by a majority of hunters that gives hunters permits to shoot selected feral animals on public and private land.

In March, the Government authorised 31 areas of State Forest throughout the State to be designated as 'hunting areas' (see Green Pages in *Wild* no 100). Hunters will be allowed to roam these areas with loaded guns and hunting bows searching for feral animals such as foxes, deer, dogs, pigs and cats. Conservationists and locals were furious over the lack of consultation and the disregard for public safety, believing that this 'solution' might make the problem worse. The designation of an additional 132 areas of State Forests and other public lands as hunting areas is in the pipeline for later in 2006.

Water wins in NSW, South Australia and Queensland

In February the NSW State Government announced that it would not be proceeding with plans to raise the walls of Tallowa Dam, a proposal that would have led to flooding of parts of the Ettrema Wilderness (see *Wild* no 99). Other good news in the same month was that the SA Government and BHP Billiton have agreed that additional artesian water will not be used to service the Roxby Downs mine expansion, saving the Great Artesian Basin springs from further stress. The EPA has scuttled plans to proceed with the second stage of the Port Hinchinbrook development in north Queensland (see *Wild* no 98) because of the risks posed to coastal wetlands. However, according to the *Colong Bulletin* the developer has told the press that he expects to turn this decision around.

Logging private land in NSW

Environment groups from around NSW have teamed up to put in place regulations on

logging of private land. Andrew Cox reports that at present rainforest, old-growth forest, and massive red gums and iron-barks can be felled on private land even though this is prohibited in public State Forests.

New legislation that bans broad-scale land clearing in NSW has provisions to limit logging and the collection of firewood on private land but is yet to be activated. Visit www.ncnsw.org.au to join a cyber-lobby campaign or to research tips on how to write your own letter of protest to the State Premier.

Fox confirmed in Tasmania


Eli Greig reports that a carcass found on a road in north-west Tasmania has been confirmed as a fox after DNA tests by Tasmania's Fox Task Force (TFTF). The carcass was found near Devonport's port, raising hopes that it was a recent arrival and not part of a permanent population. TFTF will continue monitoring the area using officers, a sniffer-dog and remote sensor cameras.

This follows a possible sighting near the Walls of Jerusalem National Park in the State's Central Highlands by two shooters last winter. A subsequent search didn't find any evidence of foxes or their dens in the area.

Some scientists believe that foxes will be unable to establish a population as long as a healthy Tasmanian devil population is present as it is believed that devils may eat fox pups. Bushwalkers in the Central Highlands region have been asked to look out for signs of foxes.

Gardens of Stone National Park extension proposal

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society have launched a plan to extend the Gardens of Stone National Park by 40 000 hectares, as reported by Andrew Cox. The area east of Lithgow, adjacent to Wollemi National Park, and extending north from Blackheath to the Capertee Valley has some of the most outstanding pagoda landscapes in Australia and the highest concentration of rare plants in the Blue Mountains.

The area was omitted from the original Gardens of Stone National Park in 1994 due to active coal mining several hundred metres underground. The proposal's State Conservation Area designation permits coal mining but calls for better protection for upland swamps and pagodas and improved management of water pumped from the mines. The area covered by slow-growing pine plantation should be harvested and restored. Sand mining also threatens the area with a new mine approved in recent months at Newnes Junction in the Wolgambe River catchment. 

Readers' contributions to this department, including high-resolution digital photos or colour slides, are welcome. Items of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Send them to *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahara, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au



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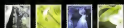
The Scenic Rim

by Stuart Olver (Dawn to Dusk Publishing, 2005, RRP \$35, info@dawntoduskpublishing.com.au)

A much needed book covering south-east Queensland's most iconic bushwalking region. Well-researched text combines with some excellent photographs to create a publication somewhere between a coffee-table book and a visitor guide. Chapters include Aboriginal history, European history, geography, flora, fauna, activities and attractions. Each section offers a comprehensive snapshot of what to expect, although the walking section has just four examples. Nevertheless, there is much here for the bushwalker and I learned a few things about my own backyard. Whether you are planning a trip, wanting more from your visit or just curious, this publication is a valuable resource.

Carl Roe

the scenic rim



Stuart Olver



Advanced Outdoor Navigation

by Greg Davenport (Globe Pequot, 2006, RRP \$34.95, www.woodslane.com.au).

Greg Davenport takes the reader from basic navigation through cross-country movement and climbing techniques, all the way to safety and survival in high-risk environments. He writes in an easy-to-read and practical manner covering all theatres of extreme adventure on land, water and rough terrain, in desert, temperate climates and snow.

The book is extremely good value for those who want to know what equipment to take along, how to pack, carry and use it, how to find their way there, and what to do if the unexpected happens. Davenport also explains the natural and human causes and effects that influence the way in which expeditions might develop. *Advanced Outdoor Navigation* is recommended for the beginner as well as the experienced adventurer.

Paula Atkinson

Hikers' and Backpackers' Guide for Treating Medical Emergencies

by Patrick Brighton MD (Menasha Ridge Press, 2005, RRP \$17.95, www.woodslane.com.au).

A morbidly humorous approach to injury and suffering is an excellent way to teach first aid. This helpful little book (100 pages)

is written by a surgeon and adventurer and he shows a real knack for summarising the essential points of causation, prevention and treatment of medical emergencies, from fractures to lightning strikes, from acute mountain sickness to organising an evacuation. It is aimed at the layperson but is also of interest to medics. There are many useful tidbits such as using tampons for nasal bleeds and rectally inserting fluids by way of a hydration bladder for hyperthermia and dehydration. Being American, the animal section concentrates on bears and rattlesnakes, but the majority of the book is applicable to any remote setting around the world. An amusing and a relevantly educational read.

John Hollott

Bhutan: a Trekker's Guide

by Bart Jordans (Cicerone, 2005, RRP \$44.95, www.macstyle.com.au).

This guide covers the major, government-approved treks (around 12 at present) as well as several less-travelled tracks. The book is jacket-pocket size, wrapped in a weather-proof cover, and there is a concise introduction on how to organise a trip to Bhutan. The track descriptions are variable: most read pleasantly, others are quite dry while the sketch maps are sparse, often lacking landmarks described in the text. This keeps the maps clean but makes them less helpful. Of course, you won't get lost; your daily fee—\$US200—provides for a guide as well as all other needs. Among the best features of the

book are the interesting text boxes that cover everything from architecture to yaks, and the inspirational photos.

Lindsay Brown

Mt Everest: the Reconnaissance 1935

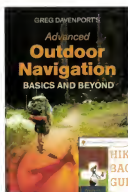
by Tony Astill, (published by the author, 2006, RRP \$75 and p&p, alpes@supanet.com).

This fifth British expedition to Mt Everest was very successful as a reconnaissance, but had the expedition focused solely on the mountain, May's fine weather could have given them a chance for the summit, making the modern obsession with oxygen and heavyweight logistics even less valid. However, earlier explorations *en route* made them arrive on Mt Everest along with monsoon snows, so a serious attempt was not made and a book wasn't written—until now. As a historical record, this is a great resource; as a read, it is too often reminiscent of a high-altitude slog in deep snow. Mercifully there are sections of respite offering glimpses of grand vistas and exploratory wonder.

There are many interesting photographs and the hardship endured by earlier mountain travellers is enlightening to contemplate in the context of the high performance, lightweight gear, accurate maps and satellite navigation of today.

Tim Macartney-Snape

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them, with RRP and a digital image of the cover for reproduction, to W&L, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.



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Swim between the flags and definitely don't dive in! This warning seems unnecessary in the current climate—see item on page 17 regarding fire damage in the Grampians, Victoria. Chris Baxter

Wild welcomes slides for this page; payment is at our standard rate. Send them to Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181.

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